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# Brixton: Who was to blame?

## Activists may face 'incitement' charge

PETER VICTOR  
STEVE BOGGAN  
and JAMES CUSICK

Police yesterday started an investigation into inflammatory speeches made before Wednesday's Brixton riots as black activists accused the Government of failing to learn from the area's devastating disturbances of 1981.

Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, confirmed that three shots had been fired by rioters and said texts of speeches were being examined to see whether charges of incitement could be brought.

Last night, as the community braced itself for fresh trouble, attention focused on Rudy Narayan, a black barrister, who told Wednesday's protesters that the police were killers and added: "They will not understand what they have done until one of them has been killed."

The tension in Brixton was palpable yesterday after the worst night of violence since the notorious riots of 1981 and 1985. Twelve people, including three police officers, were injured and more than 50 shops looted during almost six hours of rioting.

Hundreds went on the rampage after a peaceful demonstration over the death in police custody of Wayne Douglas, a 25-year-old suspected of burgling a flat and threatening the occupants with a knife, turned sour. The Police Complaints

said Douglas's death was caused by a heart condition, but an unnamed witness told the black community paper the Voice that he was beaten after being relieved of his knife.

At the area began a huge clean-up. Sir Paul said: "We have established a criminal inquiry, not just into the criminal offences on the streets, but into the inflammatory nature of Douglas's arrest.

However, a caucus of black activists criticised the government and the police for failing to learn from past riots and demanded the immediate suspension of the officers involved in Douglas's arrest.

Lee Jasper, chair of the National Black Caucus, said: "The events of last night were inevitable and we've been predicting this would happen for the last five years." After riots in 1981, 1985 and now, Mr Jasper said, the same questions were being asked but "no one has learned any lessons".

Derek Hinds of the National Black Caucus read out a list to gathered media of 51 black people he claimed had been killed since 1969 as a direct result of racial violence involving the police and prison authorities.

He described the disturbances as a "setback" for the community, but added: "It wasn't Brixton that rioted last night, it was a small minority of thugs and criminals who as ever look for an opportunity to embark on criminal exercises."

On their press conference of his officers and confirmed that gunshots were heard during the disturbances. "We strongly believe three shots were fired, not necessarily at the police," he announced.

the speeches made outside the police station and we will be exploring whether criminal offences of incitement and other offences were committed.

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## Normality amid wreckage

PETER VICTOR

As night fell on the streets of Brixton, the scruff of glass underfoot and the boarded-up shopfronts were the only reminders of Wednesday night's ugly and lawless scenes.

Some plate-glass windows were covered over after the hammering they had taken before police baton charges, others were being covered over last night just as a precaution against a repeat performance.

With temperatures plummeting, this seemed unlikely. Commuters sauntered home apparently unmoved by the re-

ports and signs of the damage. A discreet police presence – beat bobbies in their waterproof jackets with long-handled batons poking out beneath the hem – was mostly taken up with directing journalists to where they could get decent pictures of the previous night's damage.

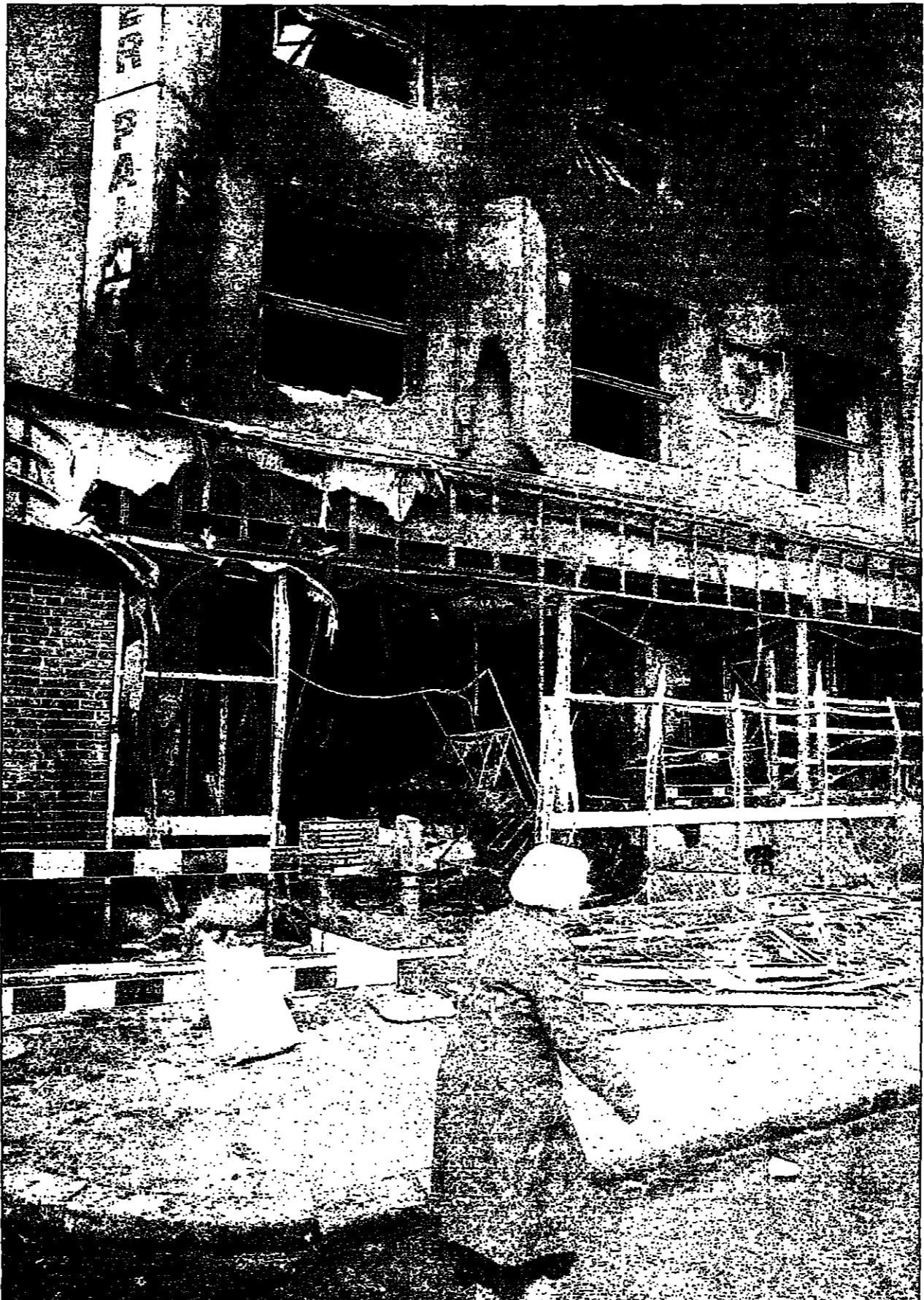
Tucked away in the side streets surrounding Brixton Recreation Centre and at the back of Brixton police station, van-loads of riot squad officers waited in their flame-proof overalls and body armour. They were taking no chances.

A growing press corps had gathered base camp opposite Lambeth Town Hall. By 7pm, a

row of outside broadcast vans, masts high in the air, vied for attention with trees full of Christmas lights and sparkling neon illuminations.

There seemed little prospect of another night of disturbances. But the police were determined to scotch any ideas.

Officers handed out leaflets to people making their way home, which outlined sparse details of Wayne Douglas's death, of a heart condition, stressed that there were no other physical injuries which could have contributed to his death, and stated that the full circumstances were being investigated by the Police Complaints Authority.



Mean streets: An elderly woman makes her way past a burnt-out building in Brixton yesterday. The legacy of Wednesday's violence and looting will take rather longer than one night to put right. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

Lawyer stands by 'police killers' speech

JASON BENNETTO  
Crime Correspondent

A radical black campaigner yesterday said he stood by his comments, made about an hour before the Brixton riots, that the police would not learn until one of their officers was killed.

Rudy Narayan, 58, of the group Civil Rights UK, is expected to be at the centre of a police investigation into whether the remarks incited a riot.

Standing on a wall outside the Brixton police headquarters he told the crowd on Wednesday evening: "The Brixton police are killers and they will not understand what they have done until one of them has been killed."

He said later that stood by his remarks and had no regrets. He added: "If a policeman is killed because he is behaving badly



Narayan: 'I tell it like it is'

and someone is acting in self-defence I will not retell."

Before the rally the civil rights group published a press release that called for all the officers involved in the arrest of Wayne Douglas the black man who died at Brixton police station, to be charged with murder.

Mr Narayan said yesterday: "I can't be responsible for what happened because the police started all the violence. There wasn't a problem until they marched on the black people and assaulted them."

He went on to describe Brixton police acting like "Nazis". He said the police community liaison committee were "house niggers who have been hand-chosen to tow the line".

Asked whether he thought his comments were irresponsible, he said: "I just tell it like it is."

A thorn in the side of the legal establishment for years, Mr Narayan retired briefly to his native Guyana in 1991 before returning to Britain.

A vigorous champion of black rights, he practised at the English Bar for 22 years. He was suspended from practice three times by the Bar Disciplinary Tribunal, most recently last year.

In his suspension for two years in 1988, over his conduct during the trials of two Rastafarians at Birmingham Crown Court, he told the tribunal that its all-white membership would "do credit to the Ku Klux Klan".

## George warns Clarke over 'gambling'

COLIN BROWN  
and DIANE COYLE

hours earlier over the first cut in interest rates in two years.

With Opposition politicians and the Chancellor's special adviser in the audience, Mr George told a press gallery luncheon at the Commons that on the balance of risk the Bank believed interest rates should have gone up another half percentage point in May.

The Chancellor took a risk in not doing that and he got lucky. The Chancellor takes the view that we were being un-

necessarily cautious. As things turned out, we were. But the point is it didn't actually need to turn out as it did and in our view, if you constantly take risks of that kind ... you will end up as a rather poor man," the Governor said.

His remarks were described as "crazy" by David Shaw, a vice-chairman of the Tory back-bench finance committee, who has backed Mr Clarke by calling for more interest-rate cuts.

A senior minister said: "The

Governor should have known better. It really is too much. The Chancellor is right to exercise his judgement. The Governor is acting as if we have an independent bank."

Mr Brown said: "After yesterday's show of unity, I am astonished by this pointed attack on the Chancellor's economic judgement."

Mr George said he found reports about his difference of view with the Chancellor "sometimes amusing but always pre-

ty amazing". Compared with the disagreements in the Bundesbank and the United States Federal Reserve, they were enjoying a "love in", he said.

His remarks appear to overshadow his main message that interest rates may have peaked. He reinforced the conviction in the City and at Westminster that further modest interest-rate cuts are on the way in the new year.

The inflation figures yesterday provided more encouraging news for Mr Clarke. Headline in-

flation was down slightly in November, showing that Britain has now enjoyed the longest peace-time run of low inflation since the Thirties. The headline rate of inflation fell from 3.2 per cent to 3.1 per cent in November.

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## VIOLENCE IN BRIXTON

Riot inquest: Alienation and distrust of police revealed as Metropolitan commissioner blames trouble on small minority of thugs

# Rising tension erupted in conflagration

JASON BENNETTO and PETER VICTOR

The gaping rift between the police and sections of the black community was fully exposed yesterday in the aftermath of the Brixton riots.

Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, admitted that the street battles were a "setback" for police relations with the local community but insisted: "It wasn't Brixton that rioted, it was a small minority of thugs and criminals who as ever look for an opportunity to embark on criminal exercises."

Sir Paul said huge strides had been made since the 1981 Brixton riots in policing style, partnership, and co-operation with communities but he stressed: "We are not prepared to allow inner-city tension to be used to create no-go areas."

His remarks that it was only a tiny section of the community — no more than about 100 — was supported by a number of black community leaders who have distanced themselves from the rioting. However, there remains a significant section of the community who believe they are being victimised by the police and that a series of deaths of black men in custody of have gone unpunished.

For the youth on the streets of Brixton in the aftermath of Wednesday's ugly scenes of looting and violence, there was little

doubt where the blame lay: the combustible mix had been simmering for years. The death of Wayne Douglas, 10 days ago, was the spark, heavy-handed riot policing had been the "turbo-charger", they said.

"Every black man around here thinks what happened to Wayne Douglas could have happened to him," said one youth.

"Ever since PC Dunn [a community policeman shot dead in nearby Clapham], they have been taking their revenge on us. It was just a matter of time before this happened."

Many expressed regret for the damage done to shops in the area and Brixton's attempts to rehabilitate itself in the eyes of the world. "But if the police had just let people have a march when they wanted, if they didn't try to use heavy tactics, none of this would have happened," said another.

Michael Gordon, 37, co-ordinator of the 409 youth and community project in Brixton, said: "There is a sense of sadness that commercial shops and small businesses have been hit. We have made good strides in attracting big businesses like the Body Shop to this area."

"But I think there was a very real sense that what happened had been coming for a long time. I don't think the relationship between the youth in this area and the police has been damaged because I don't think there was a relationship."

Assistant Commissioner Paul Manning, who commands the south-west division which includes Brixton, said recent unrest meant that police will have to "rebuild" their efforts to build trust with the black community.

He said the police had been working closely with the local authority — where they now have a full time liaison officer — and had taken part in a number of joint community schemes to help provide funding for projects involving young people.

The Metropolitan Police's recent Operation Eagle Eye street crime initiative caused outrage among many in the black community after Sir Paul said that most muggers are black.

Hubert James, director of Brixton community law centre, said the area had always suffered from an atmosphere of tension arising out of police treatment of young men.

"The council has closed many of the resources for youth around here. The youth clubs are disappearing and often those facilities that are left aren't available to the black youths because they can't afford them. All they've got left to do is stand around on street corners."

He said as a result they came into conflict frequently with local police. "I don't believe people should burn down businesses, but there is a lot of anger around here."

Thankful: PC John Tissaw recovering in St Thomas's hospital

Photograph: PA



## Injured PC's life was 'in the lap of the gods'

Injured police officer John Tissaw told today of the moment when a peaceful demonstration turned into a frenzied attack.

Constable Tissaw, 39, who lives in Kent and is based at Croydon Traffic, was on motorcycle traffic patrol duty in Brixton when the riot erupted last night.

"At first they were doing what demonstrators do, which is move about a little bit. It was no different from any other demonstration," he said from his bed in St Thomas's Hospital, London.

"We started hearing on the radio that they had set fire to the 7 Eleven store and that looters had gone by ... the crowd moved down Brixton Road. We were just leaving and 20 or 30 of them just appeared from I don't know where."

"They attacked from behind and from beside. They dragged me off the bike and I ended up in a ball on the floor."

"I got kicked — fortunately I had a crash helmet on because I felt two or three kicks to the head and I got kicks on the back. Someone took my baton off me and used that on me. I am led to believe."

PC Tissaw "in that situation seconds feel like hours to be honest. My colleagues came to my help and one got a kick in the groin. I saw people coming back to my help — they were half a dozen members of the public — to help me out, black and white, although I don't want to make a point of it," he said.

He remembered being dragged out of the mêlée but

did not recall much more until he was being tended by a police medic.

He said he had been told of reports that a motorist drove at the crowd, forcing it to disperse and almost single-handedly preventing a potential murder. "If I meet him I would be very thankful for what he did."

PC Tissaw also praised the Territorial Support Group for pulling police vans up on each side. He said: "While one of their medics was looking after me, there were four of them whose job was just to tend off the bricks. How do you say thank you for that?"

Asked whether he feared for his life, PC Tissaw, who suffered a broken shoulder, fractured ribs and bruising in the attack, said: "They did serious harm to me. But whether they would have killed me, I don't know. You are in the lap of the gods at that stage of a beating."

PC Tissaw, who has been in the Metropolitan Police for 20 years, and was in Brixton on the night of the last riots 10 years ago, said he expected to return to duty when he had fully recovered.

His wife of 19 years, Lynda, visited him last night and was expected to be at his bedside with daughters Becky, 17, and Rachael, 15, later today.

Asked what he felt about his attackers, he said: "I don't know at this stage if I feel outrageously angry towards them. They are just faceless."

"It is just something that has happened, and they will or they will not get brought to justice."

## Family sets up second post-mortem

PETER VICTOR

The family of Wayne Douglas, who died in police custody last week, have set up a second post-mortem examination into his death to be held next Tuesday.

Yesterday, Douglas's brother Albert, 38, said he was convinced that Wayne had suffered foul play at the hands of police. "We have eyewitnesses who have contacted us and local newspapers to say they saw 15 police officers kicking and beating my brother," he said.

"They say he broke into somebody's house with a knife. Even if he did that, he put the knife down when told to. They should have just arrested him but beaten him like this."

Wayne Douglas, 26, was born in Dulwich, south London, and had recently set up home with



Wayne Douglas: Another examination on Tuesday

Fourteen years on from Lord Scarman's report into the 1981 Brixton riots, more than £200m in regeneration funding has been thrown at the deprived inner-city borough, with another £10m pledged over the next few years.

But as Wednesday night's riots have highlighted, the large sums of money have failed to tackle the underlying problems facing some sections of the Brixton Community — particularly the disaffected young.

Yesterday Lord Scarman said he was "broken-hearted" about the violence and would be making it his business to find out the cause.

"This is a real tragedy. I would appeal to my friends in Brixton that the important thing is to get back to the normal, lawful process of protest and politics and that nothing will be achieved by violence in the

streets, be it against policemen or other people."

This is a complete breakdown of everything that I tried to create," he said.

Certainly, beyond the immediate impact of smashed and burnt-out shops and cars, 1995 Brixton boasts very visible evidence of effort and investment since Lord Scarman's report. The newly-opened £4.5m Ritzy cinema and arts complex, partly funded by City Challenge money, now dominates the corner of what was once known as the "front-line".

Rebuilding around the station and elsewhere in the town has been with help and a £5m boost from English Heritage, anxious to preserve some fine examples of Victorian architecture.

However, according to some locals, these changes touch too few of those in need. Black writer, journalist and Brixton

resident, Darcus Howe, said: "Millions of pounds have been poured into Brixton in the last few years under the City Challenge but blacks have not benefited from it by large."

"The rage and fear that was expressed last night was of a kind I have never experienced and this is my fourth riot," he said.

The facts remains that Lambeth — which includes Brixton, with its high concentration of Afro-Caribbean youths — is one of Britain's 10 most deprived areas as defined by unemployment levels, mortality rates and overcrowded housing.

Of an average of about 17 per cent without work in Brixton generally, among whites it is 14 per cent, among blacks it rises to 29 per cent. On some of the

borough's poorer estates most people are unemployed. Both black and white youths were involved in the latest outbreak of violence.

Across London generally, Afro-Caribbean youths are more likely to be expelled from school than their white counterparts. Young blacks aged between 16 and 24 are twice as likely to be without qualifications or work, and as the Home Office's research showed, young black people are much more likely to be stopped and searched by police, more likely to be sent to Crown court for trial, more likely to be remanded in custody and more likely to receive a prison sentence than whites.

In parts of Brixton where ethnic minorities make up nearly half of the community, these facts, borne out by brutal experience, lead to strong feelings of injustice and inequality. Add to that the spate of the deaths of black people in custody, of Gardner, Shift Leader Brian Douglas and now Wayne Douglas — and feelings of frustration and helplessness set in.

According to Claude Mornes, director of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, there has been "a piling up of issues" on the black community — including operation Eagle Eye, which targets muggers and the clampdown on asylum-seekers and illegal immigrants.

"Because there has been no visual signs of their distress, everyone thinks things have got better. In fact the underlying problems particularly for the young — those ones first identified by Lord Scarman — have got worse," he said.

## Rioters turned fury on TV camera crews

HEATHER MILLS

can, for example, identify rioters and looters.

Most news organisations resist the move until compelled to by a court order — nevertheless those involved in disturbances now view journalists as an arm of the law.

The problem is further compounded by the fact that the police, themselves, put their own photographers on the streets and rioters do not distinguish between the two.

Yesterday, Simon Cole, managing editor of Sky News, said: "It is increasingly dangerous for cameramen at any event where there is a violent confrontation. We are getting very worried about it and are now actively looking at ways in which we can give them greater protection."

Simon French, senior news editor of London News Network, said: "TV crews are seen as being targets — quickly become the targets of aggression. Clearly the power of forcing news organisations to hand over material does not help."

## Punchy 'Voice' expresses the alienation of black youths

Much of the anger and indignation stirred up in Brixton by allegations of police brutality against black youths is reflected in the pages of the black national newspapers, *The Voice* and the *Caribbean Times*, write Peter Victor and James Cusick.

Of these, *The Voice* is the far more popular and populist, often being referred to as the *black Sun*.

Its front-page account of Wayne Douglas's death, under a banner headline "Tell us the truth", which criticised *The Voice* for being sensational and trivial.

Yesterday a newsroom executive at the *Voice* was unwilling to give his name but was unrepentant. "I think our coverage was responsible and well-balanced."

"We've had two deaths now involving black men and police using these batons and there has been almost nothing about it in the 'Fleet Street' press. Why should there be? It's just another

black man."

He said a series of high-profile cases of a similar nature had critically damaged relations between black youths and the police.

"It just can't go on. Something is desperately wrong with the authorities. This is a serious issue and we have dealt with it seriously."

"Somebody did say that we've been accused of stirring things up, but we are not a black Sun."

"If you look at the way we have dealt with issues over the last few years, you can see we're nothing like that."

"This was the 51st case of a death in custody; Brian Douglas was the 50th. Wayne was 51. And this happened just down the road from our offices in Brixton."

"Wayne was not the first and he won't be the last. I think it's painfully clear that the community has no confidence in the

police."

"Met and the police as a service. We did a piece two weeks ago about a guy who got shot in Stockwell."

"He came forward to give evidence, did the right thing after witnessing a crime. He got no protection and became a victim himself."

"If the community can't trust the police, then you'll see things like Wednesday night happening again."

*Papers demand the facts about Douglas's death*

*Met and the police as a service.*

*We did a piece two weeks ago about a guy who got shot in Stockwell.*

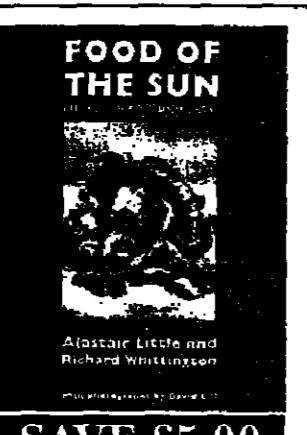
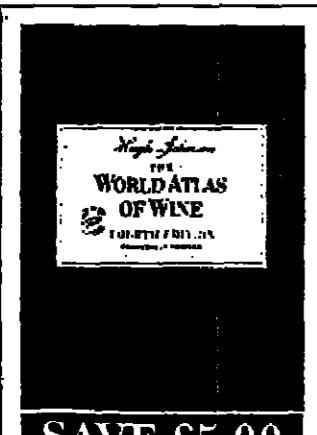
*He came forward to give evidence, did the right thing after witnessing a crime. He got no protection and became a victim himself.*

*If the community can't trust the police, then you'll see things like Wednesday night happening again.*

*Camera crews, photographers and journalists have increasingly become the focus of attacks ever since the law was changed to compel them to hand over unused footage and film to police, so that officers*

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## VIOLENCE IN BRIXTON

**Anatomy of a riot:** How a 200-strong protest rally turned into a night of looting and ugly confrontation on the streets

# Angry words that ignited the tinder-box

STEVE BOGGAN  
Chief Reporter

"The Brixton police are killers. And they will not understand what they have done until one of them has been killed."

With these words, hopes that Wednesday night's protest over the death of Wayne Douglas would remain peaceful seemed to evaporate into the freezing night air.

Until they were shouted by Rudy Narayan of the protest group Civil Rights UK, the 200 who had gathered outside Brixton police station were intent on nothing more than making known their complaints about the death of a young black in police custody.

The seeds of their anger and frustration had been sown at 2.30am on Tuesday last week when police officers arrested a confused and violent 25-year-old who had spent the previous six weeks living in a shelter for the homeless in Crystal Palace.

Wayne Douglas had broken into a flat in Strathleven Road, Brixton, and threatened a family with a knife. Details of his state of mind will emerge in the coming days, but the fact that he stole no more than a loaf of bread may turn out to be a significant pointer.

After he fled with the loaf, he was chased by police and cornered in a children's playground in New Solon Road. He threatened the officers with at least one knife - some reports say two - and had to be overpowered with the use of long batons. It is these batons which are seen by some sections of the Brixton community as offensive rather than defensive weapons. Police officers simply believe they offer more protection against knife attacks.

After being wrestled to the ground, Douglas was taken to Brixton police station but was found dead in his cell an hour later.

Scotland Yard has released preliminary details of a post-mortem examination which suggest that he died as a result of a heart condition. However, last week's issue of *The Voice*, a black community newspaper, carried an interview with an unnamed witness to Douglas's arrest, who said police had kicked and beaten him, using unnecessary force.

This, then, at 6.30pm on Wednesday, was the background for Mr Narayan's angry words. The meeting had started peacefully. It seemed that it would take more than his strong words to inflame the crowd but after he had uttered them, Mr Narayan was asked by Paul Rees, a London Evening Standard reporter, whether they had been "misquoted and possibly dangerous".

According to Mr Rees, Mr Narayan replied: "The police are using public money and pub-



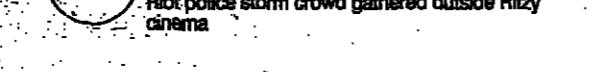
1 6:30 pm Protest rally starts at Brixton Police station  
2 7:20 pm Protesters embark on unauthorised march  
3 8:20 pm Mounted police brought in. Riot police try to disperse mob on Brixton Road



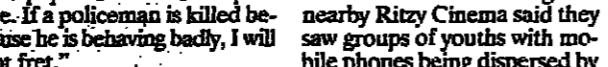
4 8:30 pm Rioters begin looting 7-Eleven store



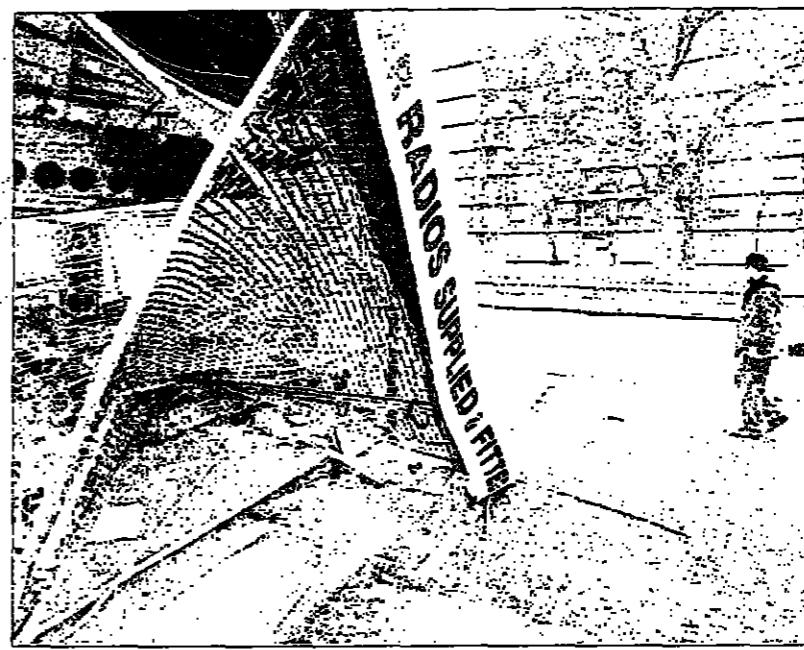
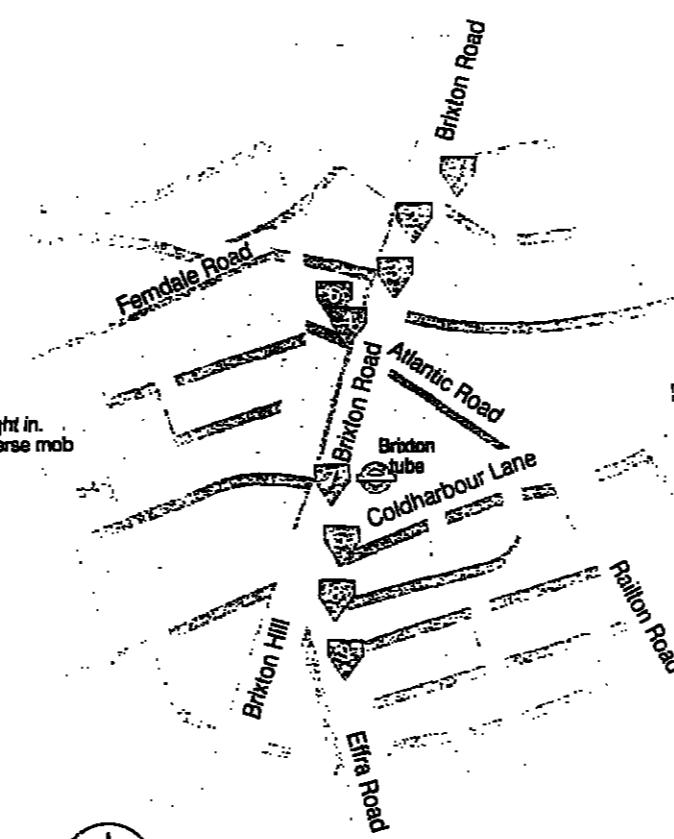
5 8:55 pm Riot police storm crowd gathered outside Ritzy cinema



6 9:30 pm 7-Eleven store set on fire



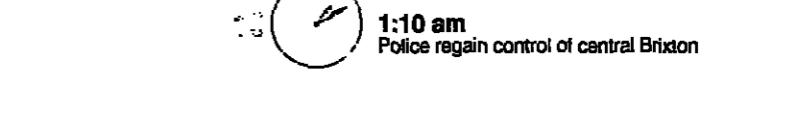
7 9:50 pm Looters hit shop on Brixton road



Yesterday Scenes of devastation



10:35 pm Car showroom looted. Three cars pushed onto Effra Road and torched



11:10 am Police regain control of central Brixton

lic equipment to kill black people. If a policeman is killed because he is behaving badly, I will not fret."

7.30pm: The crowd had decided to stage a march - which had not been cleared with the police - and a further protest at Brixton Oval, a busy traffic junction. Within 30 minutes police wearing riot gear were mobilised to stop the protesters blocking traffic.

With an increasingly hostile mood developing, journalists and passers-by were threatened by some protesters as a police cordon was set up across Acre Lane and Brixton Road.

"From here on in, it just got angrier and angrier," said one

witness. Others leaving the nearby Ritzy Cinema said they saw groups of youths with mobile phones being dispersed by police, only to re-group elsewhere.

8.20pm: Mounted police were brought in as other officers in riot gear tried to move protesters north and south, clashing with a group outside a 7-Eleven store next to Brixton Underground station on Brixton Road. One witness said:

"They were pushing people with their shields and the window smashed. Some people were saying the police actually pushed someone into the pane."

After that, all hell broke loose. A mob ran into the store,

causing staff to flee through a rear exit, and looters virtually emptied the shop while, outside, bricks and bottles were thrown at police and motorists.

8.55pm: Riot police moved into a crowd that had gathered outside the Ritzy Cinema. With other roads blocked by police, witnesses reported general panic.

One taxi driver who got in the way - and hurled racist abuse - was dragged from his cab and beaten, but he managed to escape and drove away.

9.30pm: Rioters continued to throw bricks and bottles in running battles with police until a group set fire to the looted 7-Eleven store. The store manager, Chris Edun, 33, said: "I

just stepped out on to the street for a couple of minutes and when I came back the whole place was up in flames. There were people coming in, taking stuff from the shop. The six staff that were working at the time just ran out the back and left them to smash the place up."

Looting and vandalism continued along Brixton Road for at least 30 minutes more. Morley's department store, a hi-fi shop and florists shop were all looted. Customers in Pizza Hut were showered with glass when a gang of youths threw bricks through its front fascia.

10pm: Violence escalated until the most harrowing incident of the night occurred.

John Tissiaw, 39, a motorcycle patrol officer, was dragged from his motorbike at the junction of Ferndale Road and Brixton Road by a gang of youths who severely beat him.

One witness to the attack said: "They were kicking him and one of them had a big stick which they used to hit him. He had his helmet on, so at least that protected his head. He was lying on the ground, but then they got him on to his knees and they were holding him like that, kicking him in the back as if they were trying to break his spine. It was horrific."

PC Tissiaw was rescued by colleagues after a member of the public had driven at his attackers, causing them to back off. He suffered a broken shoulder and cuts and bruises.

Midnight: The Dog Star pub at the junction of Atlantic Road and Colharbour Lane was vandalised as part of the mob's retreat.

1.10am: Police had secured the centre of Brixton, although small sporadic outbreaks of trouble continued along Colharbour Lane.

By the time Brixton returned to a relative state of normality, 50 shops had been looted, three pubs had been attacked, 10 cars and a coach had been torched or vandalised, 22 people had been arrested and 12 people, including three police officers, had been injured.

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## news

# Banks put off by cost of student loans

FRAN ABRAMS  
Education Correspondent

The Government's plans to privatisate student loans are to be delayed until after the general election in the face of opposition from the banks, it emerged yesterday.

Cuts in other areas of education might have to be made after the embarrassing postponement of proposals which would have saved the Treasury £100m in their first year. Minis-

ters hoped that the banks would take on much of the cost of the loans, but several expressed doubts about their commercial viability. The Midland said it would not be taking part.

The announcement came as students faced an increasing possibility that they might have to pay top-up fees. Cuts to university funding announced in the Budget will mean that universities' capital spending will go down by more than 50 per cent in three years, the Higher Ed-

ucation Funding Council said last night. At the same time grant and fee income will be reduced by 12 per cent.

The council has offered incentives to universities to cut student numbers and announced that it is reviewing plans to fund the development of libraries and computer networks.

At a meeting next month, some vice-chancellors will argue that under such financial pressure they have no alternative but to charge top-up fees.

Another, less radical alternative would be to press for a system under which students would receive loans for both maintenance and fees. So far politicians in both major parties have resisted such proposals but with loans worth £1bn outstanding the pressure for change is growing.

Yesterday Eric Forth, the Higher Education minister, told a Commons committee on the Student Loans Bill that he had decided to delay the reforms for

a year despite arguing against such a move only two days earlier when Labour proposed it.

"Following our discussions with the banks, we have decided to defer the implementation date of the loans scheme from October 1996 to October 1997. Considerable changes to their information technology systems ... and the considerable merger activity taking place ... would make it difficult for them to meet the tight deadline that we envisaged," he said.

A similar scheme proposed five years ago when student loans were first introduced collapsed because the banks pulled out. The current system is administered by the private Student Loans Company but is funded by the Treasury.

Bryan Davies, Labour's higher education spokesman, said ministers should never have gone ahead with legislation until it had the banks' support. He said it was only two days since Mr Forth had vigorously resisted a

Labour amendment which would have delayed implementation of the Bill for a year.

"The Government has effectively admitted that its loans scheme is flop. The banks don't want to touch it," he said.

Jim Murphy, president of the National Union of Students, also welcomed the news. "It was obvious that the banks and students themselves saw the flaws in this scheme to privatise loans. Now it is clear that the Government does as well," he said.

## IN BRIEF

### Girl, 15, dies from meningitis

A schoolgirl died from meningitis yesterday, three days before her 16th birthday.

Leanne Lester, a pupil at Banbury School, Oxfordshire, was taken ill on Monday night at her home in Banbury, and died in Horton General Hospital. A boy, 14, from the same school is recovering in hospital from a less serious form of the disease and two other pupils are said to be suffering similar symptoms.

### Jailed farmer freed

Trevor Sedgbeer, jailed last week for three months for burrowing the house he built without planning permission under earth to fool council inspectors, was freed by the High Court after apologising for his contempt. The farmer, Devon, has now been demolished.

### Death 'suspicious'

The death of a woman hit by a goods train is being treated as "suspicious" by police who said Danielle White, 30, a convicted prostitute, was found naked on the West Coast InterCity line near Northampton. The cause of death was not confirmed.

### Blood shortage

Flu among donors and bad weather have caused a serious pre-Christmas blood shortage, the National Blood Transfusion Service said. The first two weeks of December saw a fall in donations of about 10-15 per cent.

### Chaplin's cane sold

A hat and cane belonging to Charlie Chaplin sold for £44,750 at Christie's sale of film memorabilia. A yellow jumpsuit from the James Bond film *Moonraker* made £6,750.

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### BACK ISSUES

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## Ashby 'eyed up the customers' at a gay pub

REBECCA FOWLER

David Ashby, the Tory MP, was allegedly spotted in one of London's most famous gay pubs - wearing an anorak and eyeing up customers - by a journalist who had stopped off for a drink there.

Andrew Pierce, a *Times* journalist who formerly worked for the newspaper's political department, told a libel jury yesterday he visited the Queens Head pub in Chelsea on 14 December, 1991, at around 8.30pm. According to Mr Pierce, Mr Ashby arrived in casual clothes shortly afterwards and was unmistakable.

"To my astonishment David Ashby was walking towards me. You don't usually expect to see a Conservative MP in a gay pub. He was inches from my face, he looked directly at me and I looked at him," Mr Pierce said.

"I'd seen him in the House of Commons on many occasions. I remember thinking at the time, I bet he's married, I bet his wife's in the constituency."

"He was walking round the bar, stopping still, looking around, looking at some of the customers. He looked totally at ease. Most Tory MPs in my experience would run a mile if they stepped foot in a gay pub."

Mr Ashby, MP for Leicestershire North West since 1983, was particularly upset by the suggestion in Mr Pierce's witness statement that he had as much luck with customers in the

pub, as he did making an impact on the House of Commons.

Mr Pierce was giving evidence in the second week of Mr Ashby's libel case against the *Sunday Times* and Andrew Neil, its former editor. He denies he is homosexual.

According to Mr Pierce, who stayed in the pub for 45 minutes before attending a party held by Stonewall, the gay campaign group, the Queens Head is an unmistakably gay haunt.

"It's by the Chelsea barracks, which made it very popular," he said to muffled laughter from the court. "You'd have to be blind not to be blind to it. It's wall to wall with men ... gay magazines are scattered over the bar, and there are gay men canoodling. The bar staff are as camp as a row of tents, they call each other love and dear."

Many of the customers were also dressed in traditional gay clothes according to Mr Pierce, with lumberjack jackets, jeans, short haircuts and moustaches.

When Mr Pierce attended a launch party at the Cabinet War Rooms on 31 October this year, for a book he co-edited called *Great Parliamentary Scandals*, he said he was confronted by Mr Ashby who he was surprised to see at the event because he featured in the book.

"David Ashby came straight over towards me, and he behaved me I was about to take part in this case. He was aggressive and intimidating."

The case continues.



Crisis of confidence: Minister of Agriculture Douglas Hogg insists 'beef is safe', at a press conference yesterday

Photograph: John Voos

## BSE ban weakens Hogg's reassurance

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Correspondent

Government ministers and scientists made a concerted effort yesterday to persuade the public that eating beef carries no risk of catching "mad cow" disease.

Yet their advice appeared to be contradicted by new regulations banning the use of bovine spinal cords - a known source of the disease - from mechanically recovered meat (MRM), which is used in foods such as sausages, meat pies, patés and some stock cubes.

Dr Kenneth Calman, the Government's chief medical officer, admitted that people could already have eaten BSE-infected beef products in previous years.

But Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, insisted that the growing number of Government measures on process-

ing beef showed that "our first concern is the public health". The measures are intended to prevent the unidentified agent which causes bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) from entering the human food chain. Mr Hogg admitted that until there is scientific proof that BSE cannot be passed to humans: "All we can do is continue to state our considered belief that beef is safe, which we think is based on good evidence."

However, the new regulations on meat processing, which come into force today, indicate that scientists on the independent committee advising the government on BSE are still concerned about the risks posed by the disease.

Diane McCrea, head of Food and Health at the Consumers' Association, said: "If the risks are enough to prompt changes in the use of mechanically recovered meat, what should consumers be doing about products already in the market?"

Professor John Paterson, who heads the independent Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC), which advises the Government, said that one product, the beefburger, had been unfairly criticised.

"Generally they are made of ground red meat and some cereal," he said. "There is no MRM in high-street or supermarket beefburgers."

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with the **INDEPENDENT**



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15. Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, read by Mike McShane
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17. Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped*, read by David Rintoul
18. T S Eliot, reading *The Wasteland*, *Four Quartets* & *Other Poems*
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## news

# Schoolgirl's killer sent to mental hospital

The killer of the schoolgirl Nikki Conroy was sent to a hospital for the criminally insane for the rest of his life, after his trial came to an abrupt halt yesterday.

The jury at Leeds Crown Court was directed by the judge to return a formal verdict of guilty of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility after four forensic psychiatrists all agreed he was severely mentally ill on the day of the attack.

The judge, Mrs Justice Smith, ordered that Stephen James Wilkinson, 31, should be sent to Ashworth Hospital, Merseyside, and that he should be kept there for a period without limit.

Wilkinson, of Middlesbrough, Cleveland, denied murdering Nikki but admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He also pleaded guilty to the attempted murders of Michelle Reeve, 13, and Emma Winter, 12.

The judge also sentenced him to be detained without limit in the hospital for each of these offences.

Nikki, 12, died of multiple stab wounds and Michelle and Emma were also knifed after Wilkinson, who was wielding a revolver, burst into the maths lesson at Hall Garth compreh-

prehensive, Middlesbrough, on 28 March last year and forced the teacher Graham Nellist to leave. Wilkinson was overpowered when the school's deputy head, Chris Biebly, and another teacher, Dave Eland, stormed in. Only later was the handgun found to be a harmless replica.

Wilkinson, whose mental illness dated back to his teenage years, was also armed with three knives and an axe and the court heard how more children would almost certainly have died if the teachers had not intervened.

The judge acknowledged this and said she would be recommending that Mr Biebly and Mr Eland should be officially commendable for their action.

Earlier the judge explained to the jury why she had decided to direct them after a morning of submissions from the prosecution and defence counsels in their absence. She said: "You heard four very highly qualified forensic psychiatrists and they all said... that he was suffering from a severe abnormality."

Two of them had described it as paranoid schizophrenia and the other two said that it was paranoid psychosis.

"They all agree this was a severe mental illness which started in his late teens and had affected his life ever since. I have come to the conclusion that there really is no evidence on which I could give you a direction so that you could make a rational choice between two alternatives."

Before passing sentence the judge made a point of also explaining her decision to Nikki's parents, Peter and Diane, who were in the public gallery.

The judge said to them: "You may find this hard to accept and you do have my sympathy in that regard. There is not a person in this court who does not sympathise with your point of view, but I do hope you will accept this decision has not been taken lightly but with great care by the doctors, by counsel and by me."



It's life – but not as we knew it

**NICHOLAS SCHOON**  
Environment Correspondent

A new life form has been discovered, perched reclusively on the mouthparts of a crustacean which lives in the North Sea.

The tiny, filter-feeding animal is only one-third of a millimetre long, barely visible to the naked eye. It appears to replace its guts, entire innards and hairy mouthparts several times in its life, and the dwarf male form appears to be blessed with two penises.

Its Danish discoverers believe it is far more than a new species, genus, family, order and class. They claim to have struck taxonomic gold, for this creature, which they call *Symbion pandora*, is a whole new phylum.

While new species are the tiniest twigs on the great tree of life, phyla are the 'huge main branches. They represent the biggest, earliest evolutionary steps as life forms radiated and diversified several hundred million years ago. There were believed to be 39 phyla – until this week.

Humans belong to the vertebrate phylum, which includes all the mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. All the other phyla in the animal kingdom are creatures without backbones and the bulk of them can only live in water – where life began over a billion years ago.

This week's discovery was announced in the British science journal *Nature*.

Dr Geoff Boxshall, a crustacean expert at the Natural History Museum, in London, said: "New species are found every day, but this is special."



The stuff of life: 'Symbion pandora' is a new phylum

## Benefits reprieve for asylum seekers

**NICHOLAS TIMMINS and STEPHEN GOODWIN**

The Government was yesterday forced to postpone its plans to withdraw benefits from thousands of asylum seekers from 8 January, promising instead a Parliamentary debate on the changes before they take effect.

The debate is set to be fuelled, however, by a fiercely critical report from the Social Security Advisory Committee, the Government's independent advisory body on social security, which ministers will be forced to publish as they table the regulations.

The committee is understood to have warned Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, that those refused benefits while they appeal could end up destitute and on the streets.

Michael Heseltine, the deputy Prime Minister, promised MPs a debate after strong Parliamentary protests that because of the Christmas recess the Government's original plan to lay the regulations on Monday would provide no chance of a debate before they took effect early next month.

That decision means the changes cannot take effect from 8 January, and, although the de-

lay may only be a matter of a week or two, there is pressure on the Government for a more substantial breathing space.

Tony Newton, the Leader of the Commons, left the decision open, saying only that "we expect them to come into force next year" amid signs that Department of Environment ministers are pressing for a further delay, worried at the prospect of up to 13,000 asylum seekers and their families potentially becoming homeless in early January, the busiest time of the year for existing shelters and hostels.

David Alton, the Liberal Democrat MP, who had complained that implementation without a debate would have been "a blatant abuse of Parliament", said the decision was "a useful victory but not the end of the war." These "appalling proposals" had still to be reversed, he said. The debate should also await a report from the Commons Social Security Select Committee on the issue which will not complete its work until the New Year, he said.

Chris Smith, Labour's social security spokesman, said Mr Lilley should use the breathing space "to think again". The delay was welcomed by the Refugee Council, Amnesty International and others and by Westminster City Council who on Monday called for deferral of the proposals, warning the Downing Street policy unit that many of the planned £200m savings could evaporate as councils would still owe a duty of care to the children of asylum seekers under the Children Act.

Ann Windgate, Westminster's Director of Social Services, said she did not believe Downing Street had realised "that the Government's intentions could be frustrated because there is another route to obtain assistance other than the one they are trying to close off".

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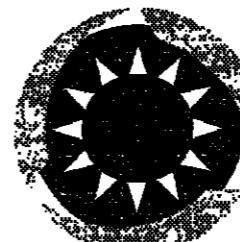
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## politics

# Tories pick their man for the message

JOHN RENTOUX  
Political Correspondent

The tabloid journalist Charles Lewington was appointed yesterday to run the Tory party's general election campaign, and began work immediately as director of communications at Central Office, in London.

Mr Lewington, former political editor of the *Sunday Express*, said he took the job because he believed John Major would lead the Tories to a fifth term of office. He replaces Hugh Colver, who resigned last month, blaming ministers for "public relations disasters" because they "behaved as if they are in office by divine right".

Sir Bernard Ingham, Baroness Thatcher's former press secretary, said he doubted that Mr Lewington could turn round the Tories' image in the 17 months, at most, before the next election.

"If the Government doesn't get its presentation right, then Tory Central Office won't get it right," he said, declining to say whether he viewed Mr Lewington as the man for the job. "An entire NHS of Tory spin doctors is of no avail if a Tory government is unclear of purpose, indecisive and irresolute."

Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, said: "Charles was the first and only candidate I approached for this post, after careful consideration" — a

Labour versus Tory: the battle of the spin-doctors	
<b>ALASTAIR CAMPBELL</b>	<b>CHRIS BLACKHURST</b>
Grammar school educated, boisterously cheerful ★★★	Public school-educated, polished, sharp-tongued, polished, sharp-tongued ★★★
Reputation as a bally but only shouts occasionally and prefers to write furious letters ★★★	Quiet, steady
Tory calls him Ali — as <i>Mirror</i> men he advised Labour's then employment spokesman on closing closed shop, 1989 ★★★	Nothing like Ali — most of Tories' Express stories by Bruce Anderson
Brutal approach can sometimes be counter-productive ★	Conservative approach to politics
Labour leader's press secretary since last October's party conference, but has not yet had to handle a real crisis ★★	Revolving door
Absolute, unsharpened propagandist for Labour — more specifically the modernisers — when he was a journalist ★★	Conservative approach to politics

formula which omitted informal approaches to other journalists on his behalf by his parliamentary secretary, Alan Duncan, MP for Rutland.

Mr Lewington, 36, is well-connected in Tory circles, and boasts a number of recent scoops based on close contacts in Central Office — including the

revelation that an official party video of the Blackpool conference had been doctored, cutting shots of rapturous applause for Michael Portillo's speech into that given by Dr Mawhinney.

Labour was jocularly dismissive of the £70,000-a-year appointment, Alastair Campbell,

Tony Blair's press secretary, was said to have taken the day off to "celebrate the good news". A colleague said Mr Campbell would be contacting Dr Mawhinney to congratulate him for showing his "customary judgement". Labour also carried out a quick search through the cut-

tings and drew attention to a story Mr Lewington wrote on the Sunday before Dr Mawhinney was appointed Tory chairman. "The Prime Minister has chosen his new party chairman in a wide-ranging 'reconciliation' reshuffle," he wrote. "He wants his loyal [leadership] campaign manager Viscount

Cranborne, leader of the House of Lords, to be at his side in the run-up to the general election."

Expectations of Mr Lewington are high, as Tory MPs have openly expressed their envy of the speed, skill and size of Labour's media operation led by Mr Campbell. Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Min-

## 'Oceanic wet' swells Tory exodus to 51

Robert Hicks yesterday became the 51st Tory MP to announce that he will not be fighting the next general election.

Mr Hicks, once described as a wet of "oceanic proportions", is MP for South East Cornwall and was first elected to Parliament in 1970.

He said: "Both Parliament and the Conservative Party have altered as you would expect over my time at Westminster. Unfortunately, in my judgement, neither has necessarily changed for the better."

Mr Hicks, 57, said: "Had



Robert Hicks: 'Liberal' stance probably held him back

anyone suggested that when I left university I would spend three-quarters of my working life in the Mother of Parliaments, quite frankly I would not have believed them."

He represented Bodmin from 1970 to 1983 with a brief break between the February and October elections in 1974. The seat became South East Cornwall in 1983.

His "liberal" stance on many issues probably kept him on the back benches for most of his political career. He was an assistant whip in 1973-74.

## Americans oppose EU fur ban

DANNY PENMAN

The European Parliament voted yesterday to implement a law prohibiting the import of fur from animals caught in "cruel and inhumane" leghold traps.

The vote, by 262 to 46, delighted animal welfare campaigners but set the parliament on a collision course with the European Trade Commission and the Canadian and American governments, which have been lobbying hard for the law to be scrapped.

Leghold traps work by clamping on to an animal's leg, biting deep into the flesh, and

restraining them until the trap arrives. The animals are frequently left in the traps for several days and they often resort to tearing off their own limbs to escape.

The EU agreed to ban the leghold from 1995 and to ban fur imports from countries still using them. Countries could still export fur to the EU, providing they banned the leghold or adopted "internationally agreed humane trapping standards".

The ban on imports was subsequently postponed until 1 January 1996.

But intense Canadian and American government pres-

sure forced the EU to reconsider the ban. They claimed it amounted to a trade restriction and threatened to prosecute the EU under international free trade rules.

Last month the European Trade Commission voted to postpone the ban and set itself in direct confrontation with the parliament. The parliament claims that only it has power to delay or scrap the ban because it is an environmental matter.

A spokesman for the European Commission said that the dispute was likely to end up in the European Court of Justice. He said: "We look forward to meeting the Parliament in court — there does not seem to be any other way."

Ken Collins, Chairman of the

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Finance watchdog in checks on £12bn projects

CHRIS BLACKHURST  
Westminster Correspondent

A government initiative to spend £12bn over the next two years in partnership with the private sector, is to come under scrutiny, it was announced yesterday.

The National Audit Office, the public finance watchdog, said it is to conduct a series of investigations into the Government's Private Finance Initiative, which formed a central plank of the recent Budget.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said £5bn of PFI projects, mainly covering health and transport, would be launched this financial year, followed by a further £7bn in 1996-97.

Jeremy Colman, a senior director at the National Audit Office, said yesterday: "Many of these projects are of such a size and importance that they would traditionally attract NAO's attention."

Mr Colman added that the NAO's staff had already started monitoring the initiative.

Over the next 12 months they will be examining how Whitehall departments have handled each project and the steps they have taken to ensure value for money for the taxpayer.

Mr Colman stressed that it was not for the NAO to question the merits of government policy. However, the PFI reports will be laid before Parliament and will be taken up by the influential Commons Public Accounts Committee.

One of the committee's usual concerns, that government contracts must be put out to competitive tender will be tested by the PFI.

The initiative is designed to encourage the private sector to come up with innovative schemes for financing building projects, including hospitals.

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## Jury clears band player whose elderly lover died in car

Pollyanna Peate was cleared by a jury yesterday of the manslaughter of Brian Phillips, an elderly musician with whom she had had a 10-year affair after band rehearsals.

Mrs Peate, 34, of Runcorn, Cheshire, a euphonium player, had denied killing Mr Phillips, 62, a bass trombonist with the Frodsham Silver Band, on the night of 15 November 1994.

Outside Chester Crown Court yesterday Mrs Peate, 34 and a mother of two, refused to make any comment. Her husband, Graham, 36, said: "We are very relieved it is all over and that Poly has been vindicated."

During the four-day trial, the court heard that the couple regularly had sexual intercourse in his car after band rehearsals. The affair was "an open secret" among their fellow musicians.

Robert Fletcher, 27, a bass player with the group, had told police: "It became common knowledge throughout the band that a relationship had formed. They were inseparable."

However, on the night Mr Phillips died, the couple had gone to a lane as usual in his car and Mr Phillips had told her that it was to be the last time they would have sexual intercourse together.

The prosecution alleged that



Pollyanna Peate: Affair known among musicians

whom she married almost 40 years ago when she was 19. She kept away from the court during the trial, but had told police: "I was totally unaware ... that Poly and my husband were having an affair ... It has come as a great shock to me. I have never suspected him ... of having any affairs."

Mrs Peate told the court that she loved her husband and had been happy with him, although he had been a gambler.

When police had questioned Mr Peate he said: "I would describe my marriage as perfect. My wife and I get on together and I trust her implicitly."

Among the witnesses in the case were the band vice-chairman, Terence Hoppley, and his wife, Carolyn. They met through the band and left their partners to live together in Salter, near Chester. Mrs Hoppley had told police that she was aware of a "chemistry" between Poly and Brian, and had heard her husband and Brian joking about "going down to the marshes".

After Mr Phillips died in the car, Mrs Peate walked back into Frodsham and called a taxi home. She told police later that she had gone to bed with her husband and made love – but claimed that she was thinking about Brian.

Mrs Peate struck him about the head at least four times, causing the heart attack that killed him. But the jury accepted Mrs Peate's claim that she had not attacked him and that he had died while they were making love.

She told the court: "He died having sex. I'm sorry, but that's how it happened. I have nothing to admit."

The affair had been hidden from their spouses. Mr Phillips' wife, Sybil, met Poly when the band was performing, but was totally unaware of the relationship with her husband.

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## Law Society chief humbled

STEPHEN WARD  
Legal Affairs Correspondent

The solicitors' leader, Martin Mears, was forced to back down on fixed fees for conveyancing yesterday, after his opponents seized on advice from the Master of the Rolls that the plan would probably break the law.

Instead, he got no more than a commitment to consult members to try to find a way to stop cut-price conveyancing, and was forced into the humiliating step of having to agree to get legal advice from a barrister on all options.

One proposal is to try to persuade the Master of the Rolls, Sir Thomas Bingham, to accept

that it would be in the public interest to introduce a minimum scale of conveyancing fees – if the Law Society promised to enforce quality standards, on solicitors.

The Law Society's ruling council met in London for what had been expected to be a showdown between the old guard and the newly elected Mr Mears, who had stood – with his deputy, Robert Sayers – on a policy of fighting for higher conveyancing fees.

After a stormy morning session, the leaders agreed over lunch to adopt large sections of a policy Mr Mears had described at the start of the meeting as a "wrecking amendment". Mr Mears had to apologise for his phrase. Opponents had pointed out the damage to the image of the profession if it pursued an unlawful policy to try to increase their incomes, especially if it was a failure.

Mr Sayers had produced a policy which would effectively have banned cut-price conveyancers by taking away their Law Society insurance cover, because they were supposedly a bad risk. They would have been forced instead to seek cover from commercial insurers, probably paying prohibitively high premiums. In effect, cut-price conveyancing would have been banned.

GERALDINE NORMAN

A copy of the signed confession of a forger who made seven gold icons to be offered for sale at Sotheby's this morning at prices ranging from £300 to £6,000, has been handed to the *Independent*.

All of the icons are catalogued as gold plaques "enamelled in the 12th-century style" and depict saints and the Holy Family in bright enamel colours on a gold background, a style characteristic of the Byzantine age.

Sotheby's had realised they were not 12th-century but no one knew who made them until now. Experts described the discovery as "exciting".

It turns out to have been a craftsman who worked in St Petersburg at the turn of the century for Carl Fabergé, the famous Russian jeweller.

Tatiana Fabergé, his great-granddaughter, recently found

the confession – written in 1916 – in the archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg, with the help of Valentin Skurlov, a jewellery historian. She and Skurlov are working on a biography of Fabergé's chief workmaster, Franz P Birbaum. It was Birbaum who first recognised the deception and forced a confession from the forger, Peter Nikolayevich Popov.

The confession is signed with an X, since Popov was illiterate. At that time the gold icons belonged to a Russian called M P Botkin, the artist son of a rich merchant family who formed a magnificent collection of medieval and Renaissance art which he bequeathed to the Russian nation just before the 1917 Russian revolution.

According to Skurlov, the Soviet artist Igor Grabar also noticed that the icons were fakes and persuaded the Russian government to sell them off in the 1930s. Botkin's collection included 150 enamel icons of the type for sale at Sotheby's, of which Popov confessed to making 109. Others are now in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, in New York, the Cleveland Museum and Dunbarton Oaks. The museums all bought their icons in good faith,

believing them to be genuine Byzantine pieces. In 1988, David Buckton, of the British Museum, unmasked them as later imitations.

The icons were apparently made to dupe Botkin. The mastermind was a fashionable photographer – the David Bailey of the day – called Stepan Iurevich Sabin-Gus. A collector of genuine Byzantine relics, Sabin-Gus seems to have recognised Botkin as having more money than sense and produced the fake icons.

Popov says in his confession that he worked for Sabin-Gus over a 17-year period. "The execution was surrounded by mystery. More than once, the room where Popov was working was locked, obviously to prevent incidental visits by clients of Sabin-Gus's photographic establishment." Birbaum wrote a letter extracting the confession.

Popov's speciality was bending fine wires of gold into patterned cells which would then be filled with coloured glass paste (enamel) and fired. Popov told Birbaum that Sabin-Gus enamelled the images himself at a local jeweller's shop.

Botkin was taken in. The magnificent catalogue of his collection published in 1911, a rare copy of which is also for sale at Sotheby's (valued at £400-£600), includes his comments on Byzantine enamels. He wrote: "The difficulty of the cloisonné technique, or rather the lost skill, makes forger, almost impossible."

John Stuart, Sotheby's Russian art expert, was amazed to hear of the confession yesterday. "It was always a mystery," he said. "At one time they were thought to be genuine. One could only think it's very exciting that this document has been discovered."

A gold plaque depicting St Philip holding a scroll



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Fake gold icons: Forced confession from 1916 is found in Russian archives



Fake icon: A Sotheby's official holds one of a pair of gold enamelled plaques depicting the Archangel Gabriel

Photographs: Edward Sykes

## Master forger's legacy goes on sale

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## MADRID SUMMIT

**Single currency:** Conflicting views on timetable to be addressed despite member states' doubts about economic benefits

# Leaders to push for fresh EMU momentum

SARAH HELM  
Madrid

European leaders, meeting today in Madrid, will proclaim a new determination to halt the mounting wave of doubt about a single currency, and attempt to map out a clearer path towards EU reform and enlargement.

The resolutions and rhetoric, however, are unlikely to mask the deep uncertainty about Europe's future, brought into sharp focus by unrest in France, and by the continued failure of the leaders to agree a common vision about the shape of the union, or its timetable for expansion to the east.

The summit is certain to be marked again by British attempts to slow down further integration. John Major is expected to issue strong warnings about the threat to the union if a hard core of countries moves ahead towards a single currency, leaving other member states on the outside.

France and Germany have attempted to agree a common agenda for Madrid in recent weeks to revitalise their relationship. However, they too have scaled down earlier ambitions as public opinion has turned against them. Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, has a fight on to convince the German public of the benefits of the single currency, and he knows that his dream of European political and monetary union will be shattered if France cannot overcome its present wave of strife.

The underlying tensions will inhibit the leaders in their attempts to set out clear objectives for next year's "Maastricht II".

rolling conference on European reform, due to open in Turin, under the Italian presidency, in March.

Despite the sense of deep uncertainty, Spain will nevertheless be hoping to round off its six-month presidency with a range of important decisions at Madrid. Suggestions that the start date for monetary union – slated for 1 January 1999 – should be delayed will be once again rejected.

Leaders are hoping to prove their faith in the project by finally deciding on a name, which is widely expected to be the Euro. However, while some reports suggest that the Florin is still a strong outsider, no country has so far suggested a serious alternative to the German idea.

Britain, embarrassed by decisions to name the currency before the Government has committed itself to join EMU, is expected to take a back-seat in the discussions, but officials said this week: "We can live with the Euro."

Important decisions on the detailed timetable for the transition to monetary union will also be finalised in Madrid. In particular, France and Germany are expected to solve their differences over the date for a decision on which member states have passed the economic test in order to qualify. The date is likely to be set for early 1998, based on economic results for 1997.

John Major will renew his calls for far-reaching study into the destabilising effects of creating a two-speed Europe, in which a small group of countries, led by France and Germany, join monetary union



Euro-beat: Police on patrol at the Madrid congress hall

Photograph: Javier Bauluz / AP

without properly assessing their relationship with countries outside. The British concerns have been heightened by Franco-German insistence that their progress towards integration will not be held up by slower member states.

At Madrid the Government is expected to speak about the danger of a new hard-core voting block within the EU, which British officials warned this week could have a "dramatic"

effect on all policy-making. Mr Major is expected to voice fears about the effect that a hard-core, voting block inside the EU, would have on a range of political decisions, including allocation of regional aid funding, budgets and foreign policy spending. If such a voting block were to form, one senior official said, it would raise questions about whether the EU could still be called the EU.

On the table at Madrid will be the report of a six-month study into reform options for next year's Inter-Governmental Conference. The study shows only Britain resisting relinquishing more veto powers to qualified majority voting.

Britain's isolation on the veto question is certain to be exposed in Madrid again as leaders discuss plans for taking in new members from eastern and central Europe.

Leading article, page 18

# Germany wedded to vision of unification

Bonn's desire for integration remains resolute, writes Imre Karacs

Germany goes into today's European summit armed with modest proposals for streamlining the community, but behind the conciliatory rhetoric lurks a vision untainted by recent rows over the future of the continent.

In an interview on the eve of the summit, Karl Lamers, a prominent foreign policy strategist in the governing Christian Democratic Union, predicted that Britain would not be able to resist closer integration – a process that inevitably will lead to the creation of a federal government of Europe.

Mr Lamers, who whipped up a storm in Britain last year with proposals for the creation of a hard-core Europe excluding Euro-sceptic states, has seen some elements of his blueprint elevated to official policy in the past week. Last Thursday, France and Germany jointly called for an amendment to the Maastricht treaty enabling member states in the fast lane of integration to "strengthen" ties among themselves.

"I was very pleased with the outcome of the Franco-German summit, as it made proposals for a clause in the new treaty for what we call 'core Europe,'" Mr Lamers said.

The most important example of this will be monetary union, which Germany insists must begin in 1999, with "six to eight members" initial.

Despite British opposition to the common currency, London's eventual participation in EMU figures prominently in the German script. "I am greatly convinced that Britain will join,"

Mr Lamers said. "It's only for political reasons that Britain is unable to say this now openly."

The economic arguments in favour of monetary union are well rehearsed. A common market needs a common currency, and the rising hegemony of the Deutsche Mark is putting strains on Europe's economies and fueling resentment against German power across the continent.

On many issues, member states already vote by majority. Bonn accept that this state of affairs is a long way away, not least because Britain resists the "federal slide" at every step. One of the main areas of conflict at today's summit and next year's inter-governmental conference will be the question of qualified majority voting on important community matters. On many issues, member states already vote by majority.

Bonnie is adamant that the abolition of the right of veto in other key policy areas is essential if Europe is to have a coherent voice. "In the long term, it is impossible that one country

should prevent others from doing what's needed to be done," Mr Lamers said. "Again and again, British representatives, including Tony Blair, say only the common will matters, not the decision-making system."

But German efforts to recruit other states to this cause have not been entirely successful, with France still holding out against qualified majority voting on foreign policy. "I do not deny that there are still differences between France and Germany, but on the other hand we have made many far-reaching agreements," said Mr Lamers, citing recent examples of military co-operation.

Nevertheless, Bonn is concerned that the Franco-German axis is not pulling its weight in the push for closer integration. There are worries about the turmoil in France and Paris's ability to meet the criteria for monetary union, and suspicion linger about French commitment to co-operation in the fight against terrorism and crime.

For these reasons, presenting a united front against London's foot-draggers will be difficult. In the areas of defence, justice and home affairs, Bonn has the backing of Italy, Spain and the Benelux countries. The other member states, while standing aloof from Britain, remain cool to some German proposals, or want to tread a more cautious path.

Despite these setbacks, Germany is optimistic that the momentum behind integration cannot be stopped. "I am absolutely certain that the process of European unification is of a historic character, similar to the process that created the nation states," Mr Lamers said.

"I hope that in 10 years' time we will not only be striving for a European government, but we will have some kind of European government. And if we have a European state, then I hope it will be of a federal kind, and not a centralised one. We are of course strictly against a centralised government."

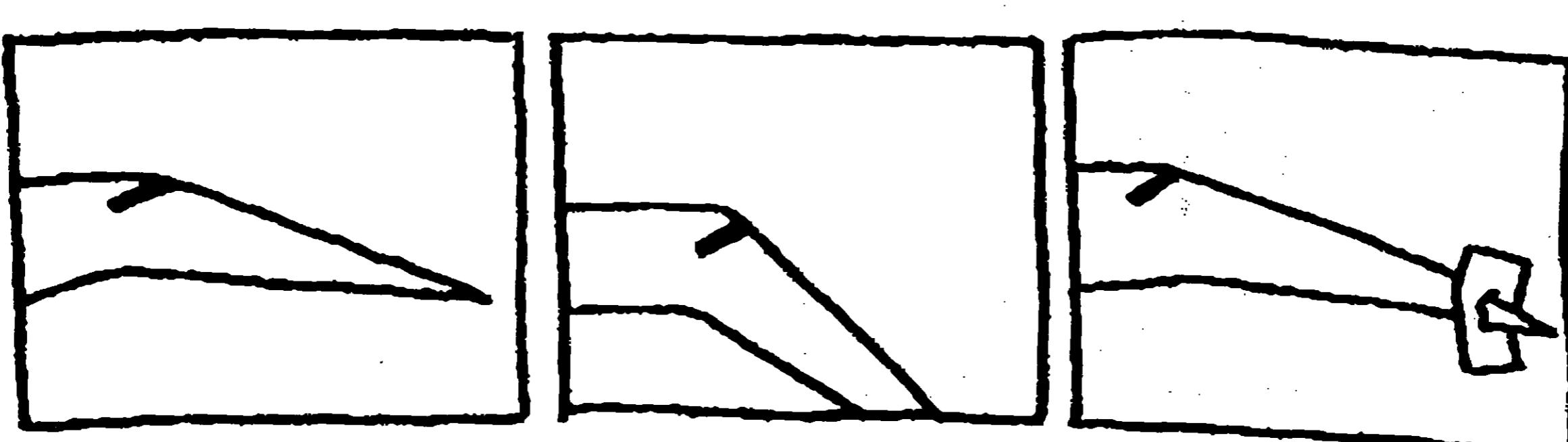


Karl Lamers: 'I am greatly convinced Britain will join'

half in and half out," Mr Lamers predicted. "That will no longer be possible."

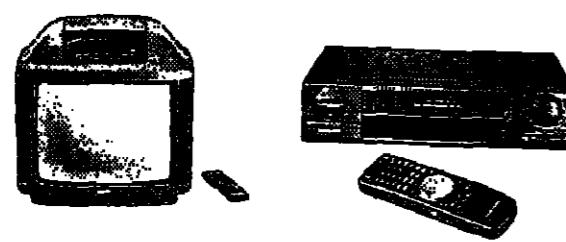
But even the wildest optimists in Bonn accept that this state of affairs is a long way away, not least because Britain resists the "federal slide" at every step. One of the main areas of conflict at today's summit and next year's inter-governmental conference will be the question of qualified majority voting on important community matters.

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## international

**Bosnia settlement:** As Nato prepares to move in Clinton urges leaders to make the agreement work for sake of their children

# Sceptical leaders sign precarious peace deal

TONY BARBER  
Paris

It was 11.47am at the Elysée Palace yesterday when the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia picked up their gold-tipped fountain pens and signed a peace treaty intended to herald a new dawn for the Balkans and Europe as a whole. It was less than 15 minutes later that the Bosnian President, Alija Izetbegovic, spoke the words that reminded the dozens of world leaders in attendance just how precarious the settlement may prove to be.

"My government is taking part in this agreement without enthusiasm," he announced, comparing Bosnia to a patient resigned to swallowing his prescribed medicine. The treaty guaranteed his country's unity, he observed. "But will this truly materialise or just remain a piece of paper?"

If Mr Izetbegovic's blunt bleak assessment of Bosnia's future threatened to cast a pall over the ceremony, the required spirit of anodyne optimism was quickly restored by Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, once widely viewed as the principal villain of the three-and-a-half year long Bosnian war. "For my part," he said, "I am convinced that a common language can be found among the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, despite the agonies they have passed through."

It then fell to President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, a communist general turned historian and nationalist politician, to give a potted summary of the causes of Europe's bloodiest conflict since 1945. The Bosnian war, he explained, was the culmination of a process that had begun with the Roman Empire's partition into its western and eastern components and continued with the Ot-

toman conquest of south-eastern Europe.

His sweep through history, drawing a convenient veil over the crimes committed by the nationalist warlords and "ethnic cleansers" of the 1990s, did not seem to impress the six world leaders standing behind him. They included Felipe González, the Spanish Prime Minister, representing the European Union; President Bill Clinton of the United States; President Jacques Chirac of France; Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany; John Major, the Prime Minister, and Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian Prime Minister. Mr Chernomyrdin was standing in for President Boris Yeltsin, still being nursed back to health after his second heart attack this year.

All six joined the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian leaders in signing the treaty, underlining the degree to which the Bosnian war has sucked in the outside world and tested to the limit the ability of international institutions to settle conflicts.

The buck of peace-making, having rested for four years with the EU, the United Nations and the American, European and Russian "Contact Group", now passes to Nato, which is to deploy 60,000 troops in Bosnia in an effort to convert the fine words of the peace treaty into a stable settlement.

"The conflict we hope is over, but the job truly is not done," Mr Major said. "It is now up to all of us to turn ceasefire into peace, peace into a lasting settlement, and the countries of former Yugoslavia into a stable and prosperous part of the European family."

Mr Clinton, whose hopes of re-election next year require that the 20,000 US troops going to Bosnia do not become entangled in a revived war, recalled Bosnia's tradition of re-

ligious and national tolerance. "If that past is any guide, this peace can take hold," he said. "If the people of Bosnia want a decent future for their children, this peace must take hold. Do not let your children down."

Before the ceremony, Mr Clinton was at pains to smooth French feathers ruffled by the way that US negotiators effectively brushed Europe aside when brokering the peace settlement last month in Dayton, Ohio. Praising France for its diplomatic efforts and its contribution to the UN operation in former Yugoslavia - 56 French soldiers died and almost 600 were wounded, the largest number of any country - Mr Clinton told Mr Chirac: "We are signing this treaty in the place where it should be signed."

The French government urged Serbia to extend full recognition to Bosnia, Croatia, and Macedonia in their pre-war

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"If the people of Bosnia want

# French railmen signal first crack in strike

MARY DEJEVSKY  
Paris

With trade unions planning another big demonstration in Paris tomorrow, the first small cracks have started to appear in the strikes that have paralysed transport in France for three weeks. Train drivers in several major cities – including Strasbourg, Nancy and Reims – voted yesterday to return to work, as did a number of key depots in northern France, including Calais and Lille. One line of the Paris Metro was reopened briefly yesterday morning.

Unfortunately for President Jacques Chirac, these distant harbingers of an end to the industrial unrest were too insubstantial to affect the continuing chaos that prevailed yesterday in Paris beyond the heavily guarded rectangle enclosing the Elysée Palace, the foreign ministry and Les Invalides.

Instead of staying in a show-piece capital, washed and brushed for the occasion, foreign dignitaries attending the Bosnia peace signing had to fly into the city by helicopter, trans-

fer to their official cars beside the lawns of Les Invalides, to be rushed to the Elysée.

The pavements were full of determined pedestrians and cyclists. On adjacent bridges, meanwhile, rows of cars were locked even more densely than on previous strike mornings because their usual thoroughfares were blocked off.

Yesterday's first breaches in the strike followed a series of concessions from the government, which has effectively agreed to scrap all proposed changes in pension terms and conditions for public sector workers. It has also taken back to the drawing board a restructuring plan for the state railway company, SNCF, that was expected to bring closures of unprofitable branch lines.

Yesterday, while the ceremonies for Bosnian peace took their course, many a French man and woman could be heard wishing that the same peace could be installed closer to home. "Let's hope," said the man beside me as President Chirac initialised the Bosnian peace treaty, "that the next time he does this, he'll be signing a truce with the trade unions."

majorities again yesterday to remain on strike. Postal and telephone services are still disrupted, and several provincial cities are without refuse collections and other public services.

Even in places where railwaymen have agreed to return to work, the trains still will not be able to run if other parts of the regional network remain on strike. There is also the risk of a national divide opening up if the southern part of the country continues to strike while the north starts to return to work.

In the past two weeks, militancy in south and central France, especially in the big cities of Marseille and Toulouse, has exceeded that of many northern cities, even of Paris.

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Fishy business: French fishermen from St Jean de Luz and Cibourne protest yesterday against low stock prices. Photograph: Christian Bordene/Reuter

## Bonn resignation shakes coalition

BONN (AP) — Germany's justice minister resigned yesterday because her party ended its months of opposition to new law-and-order legislation.

Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger resigned after her fellow Free Democrats endorsed eavesdropping legislation favoured by the rest of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's three-party coalition. Her departure could unsettle the political balance which holds together the government.

The popularity of the Free Democrats, junior partners in Mr Kohl's government, has nosedived in the past year and party leaders hope adopting more conservative stances on some issues will help them survive.

In votes cast by about 35,000 Free Democrats, 63.3 per cent favoured letting law authorities plant eavesdropping bugs in suspected criminals' homes, said Guido Westerwelle, the party's general secretary. Ms Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger told reporters the proposed law

is a threat to citizens' privacy. With tears in her eyes, she said the legislation "is a decisive step away from the concept of a liberal state of law" and her party's support for it "a change of direction in the domestic and law policies of the FDP".

Burkhard Hirsch, another Free Democrat, protested against his party's endorsement of the legislation by quitting as the party's spokesman on justice issues and as a member of a parliamentary justice committee.

Mr Kohl's coalition, which has a razor-thin majority in parliament, has been buffeted in weeks past by the plummeting popularity of the Free Democrats. The party has been voted out of several state parliaments over the past year.

Mr Kohl faces the question of whether to replace Ms Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger with another Free Democrat or with someone from his own Christian Democrats or from the Christian Social Union, the other group in his coalition.

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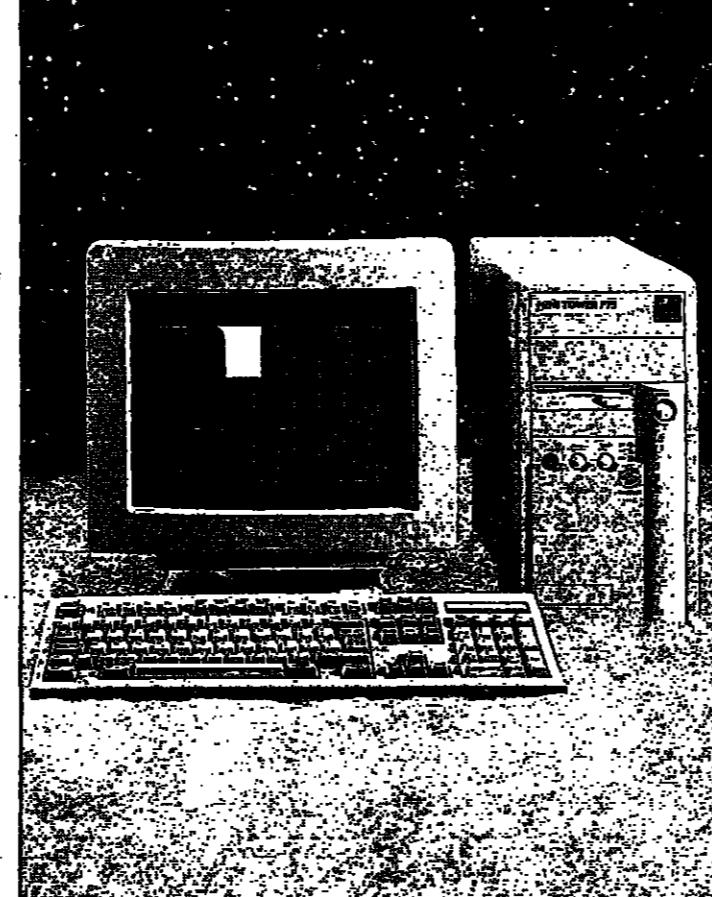


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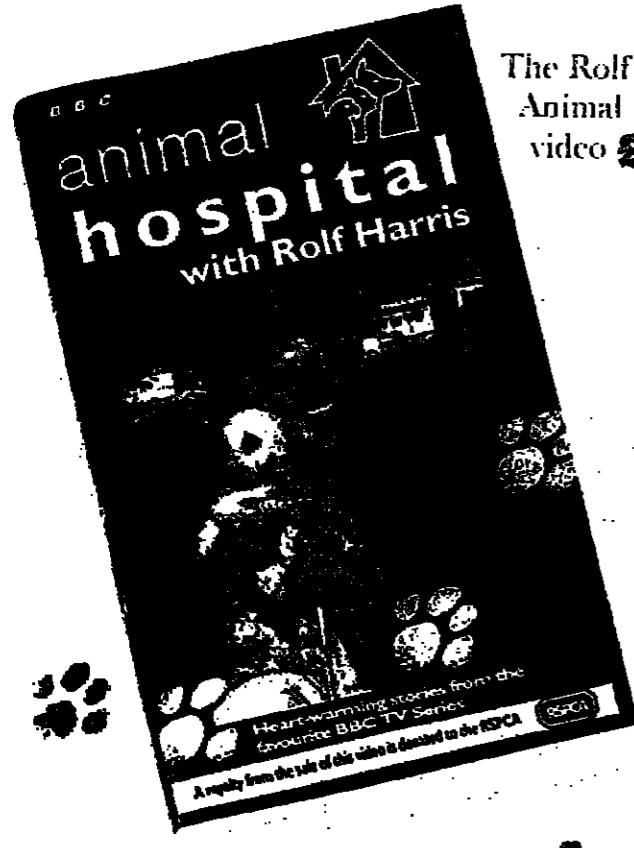
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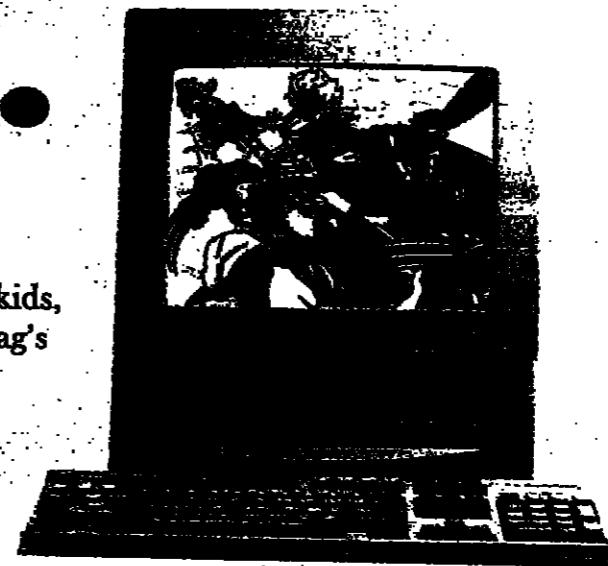
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## international

# Islamists' long wait for justice

**Robert Fisk in**  
Hebron hears how  
a once-exiled  
Hamas supporter  
views the peace

We had last met on the bare mountain. The snows of Lebanon were sweeping over the slopes of Marj el-Zahour and Sheikh Bassam Jarra - a long-standing supporter of Hamas, deported with hundreds of other Palestinians by that peacemaker *extraordinaire* Yitzhak Rabin - was condemning Yasser Arafat's deal with Israel. What good could come from a peace deal agreed in secret that dishonoured those who had died in the intifada? This is what Sheikh Bassam Jarra was asking in his cold Lebanese exile two years ago.

He is thinner today, dressed no longer in an *abaya* robe but in a new leather jacket; his beard neatly trimmed as he sits in the students' union office of Hebron University. There are other Hamas supporters from Marj el-Zahour around him, greyer than I remember them but still listening to the teacher with the same rapt attention they gave him during history lessons in the big tent at the freezing, self-styled University of Marj el-Zahour. "It changed us all," he said. "Marj el-Zahour had an effect on all of us. It has made me more relaxed because I realise the world noticed our plight and made me realise there were still values."

He paused. He would pause a lot during our little meeting in the crowded students' office, aware perhaps that all those bearded faces would be looking for incoherencies as well as wisdom in their history teacher. Here, after all, was someone who had known Sheikh Bassam Jarra in exile, a reporter from a decidedly different culture who might know things they did not know, a witness to what the 400 Palestinians in their - for Palestinians near-legendary exile actually said two years ago.

"Because the world proved to be less of a jungle than we thought, a lot of us have doubts about evaluating our experience in southern Lebanon," Sheikh Jarra continued. "Our political speech was modified. In Marj el-Zahour, I had to talk to people from different cultures. We had to find a language that was convincing to others, not just to ourselves. That's why we developed a certain language."

And the PLO-Israeli agreement that the exiles had so scornfully dismissed back in the snows of their mountain encampment? Any solution is connected to the concept of jus-



Round-up: Palestinian men, forced to hold hands, are taken for questioning by Israelis in Bethlehem yesterday. Photograph: Jim Hollander/Reuters

tice," Sheikh Jarra replied. "If there are mistakes in the plan, it won't last long. There is a possibility that there will be peace but there will also be a lot of violence. Everybody believes that this is a superpower solution that is not based on justice. So everyone is now waiting for the permanent phase. The permanent solution will decide whether there is peace later. But Israel will not deal with us with justice."

What Sheikh Jarra meant was simple. If the Israeli redeployment from Palestinian population centres in Gaza and the West Bank - they are not withdrawing - brought a measure of initial happiness among Arabs, only the final stage of PLO-Israeli negotiations will prove whether the peace is a trick or a reality. Will the Palestinians have a capital in Jerusalem? Will Arafat's men gain an Egyptian-style election victory, complete with vote-rigging, impersonation, intimidation and Mubarak-size percentages? Egypt's decision to send election observers to Palestine has not exactly encouraged the belief

that there are mistakes. Perhaps that is why Sheikh Jarra was being so careful. "We want good relations with the Palestinian authority," he said. "But the Islamic people are not interested in participating in the Palestinian elections next month. These elections will not satisfy the Islamic movement because it would be a form of blackmail - because these elections are being held to support the peace process."

Merely to participate in elections would be to accept the PLO-Israeli agreement. That, clearly, is the concern of Hamas. But then, what if Arafat's men gain an Egyptian-style election victory, complete with vote-rigging, impersonation, intimidation and Mubarak-size percentages? Egypt's decision to send election observers to Palestine has not exactly encouraged the belief

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## Austrians warned of threat from extreme right

**ADRIAN BRIDGE**  
Vienna

After making a lacklustre start, Franz Vranitzky, the Austrian Chancellor, has come out fighting in his attempt to be returned to power in the general election on Sunday.

Presenting himself as a pillar of stability, Mr Vranitzky has warned that poor results for his Social Democrats (SPO) could open the door to Jörg Haider, the populist leader of the far-right Freedom Party (FPO) and seriously damage Austria's international reputation.

At the same time, the Chancellor has been scornful of his former conservative allies in the People's Party (OVP) and their ambitious leader, Wolfgang Schüssel, who has hinted that he might try to form a new coalition with Mr Haider.

"As far as I am concerned, Mr Haider - a man who once praised the 'orderly' employment policies of Adolf Hitler - can never qualify to be a member of the Austrian government," Mr Vranitzky said. "And if the Conservatives did go in with him, it would spell the end for them."

According to the latest opinion polls, Mr Vranitzky's tactics appear to be working. Within a few weeks ago the gap between the two main parties was down to just 1 percentage point, the SPO is now set to win 34 per cent, against 28 per cent for the FPO.

Snapping at their heels, on 24 per cent, is Mr Haider's FPO, which campaigns on an anti-immigration platform and which promises to smash the two-party monopoly of power, privilege and patronage.

The projected results are similar to those recorded in Austria's last general election, in October 1994, and, if confirmed, they may well lead to a continuation of the SPO-

OVP coalition that has governed Austria for the past nine years. For the two parties to work together again, however, they will have to patch up their differences over how to reduce the country's spiralling budget deficit, the issue which precipitated the collapse of the last coalition two months ago.

Both parties agree the deficit, set to reach 120bn schillings (£8bn) this year, must come down for Austria to meet the Maastricht criteria for economic and monetary union. But while the SPO favours tax rises to achieve it, the OVP wants large cuts in generous welfare payments and subsidies.

Mr Vranitzky, a former



Vranitzky: Closing the gap

banker who is now into his 10th year as Chancellor, believes that a compromise is possible. Mr Haider, who has presided over a fivefold increase in FPO support since taking over a leader in 1986, is prepared to hide his time.

While not closing the door to participation in government now, he has indicated that he would be quite happy to see the two main parties joining forces in a new coalition which, he believes, would collapse within two years.

At that point he thinks the FPO would become the largest party and he could achieve his career ambition to become Chancellor in 1998.

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## international

War in Chechnya: Heavy casualties in republic's second city threaten Yeltsin's bid to legitimise puppet regime

# Fightback by rebels casts pall on elections

PHIL REEVES  
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin's high-risk efforts to legitimise Russia's puppet government in Chechnya by holding elections in the breakaway republic were under threat last night after the war flared anew when rebels stormed into its second largest city, Grozny.

Helicopter gunships pounded the city centre and there was heavy street fighting, in which at least a dozen people were killed, after Chechen fighters seized a hospital and several buildings, according to news reports from the area.

A statement by the Russian military command in Chechnya said that about 600 rebels took part in the fighting in Grozny, which lasted all day, and were "hiding in residential areas, actually behind the backs of civilians, and firing at federal troops sent to the town".

Details of the conflict were still sketchy last night, as Russian troops reportedly had sealed off the entire city, which lay under a veil of black smoke. But one Russian soldier manning a checkpoint about three miles

away told Reuters there were "very many" dead and wounded. Another said that the Chechen fighters had "taken almost the entire town", which is about 20 miles east of Grozny.

In June, Chechen rebels took 1,000 people hostage after seizing a hospital in the southern Russian town of Budeinovsk in a conflict in which 100 people died. This time – according to the Itar-Tass news agency – they took a hospital, but allowed almost all patients and doctors to leave unharmed, detaining only one person. Reports were trickling in last night of violence in two other towns, Novogrozny and Shatoy.

The attack came on the first day of voting in local and national elections in Chechnya which the Kremlin – to the astonishment of many observers – has insisted on holding, but which the rebels have long vowed to disrupt.

The Russian authorities decided to open the polling booths three days, a move which was intended to ensure that enough people vote to make the election legitimate. The threshold has been lowered from the customary 50 per cent turnout



A Chechen woman shakes her fist as Russian soldiers go to cast votes in Grozny yesterday. Rebels have called for a boycott of the polls

to 25 per cent, and numbers have been boosted by allowing those Russian soldiers permanently based in Chechnya to take part.

The chances that the elections in Chechnya will run their course are lessening. There also were exchanges of gunfire

in Grozny yesterday, where only one polling booth – used by the local Russian-backed administration – remained open by lunchtime.

The Kremlin wants the election – which is expected to return the present Russian-backed prime minister, Doku

Zavayev, to office – to lend legitimacy to the puppet administration in the republic. It is difficult to believe, however, that anyone beyond a stone's throw from the Red Square will take the results seriously. The poll is not subject to any independent monitoring.

Yesterday's developments will do nothing to improve the standing of President Boris Yeltsin, whose decision to invade Chechnya a year ago caused deep resentment.

Indeed, coming only three days before polls to elect a new State Duma, or lower

house, the latest fighting will do little to advance the cause of the government-backed party.

Tomorrow President Yeltsin will address the nation. Carrying favour among an angry and disillusioned electorate always was going to be an uphill task. Now his job is harder still.

## Andreotti rues the day he said 'yes' to a life in Italian politics



Regrets: Giulio Andreotti

Giulio Andreotti, the former Italian prime minister who is on trial in Sicily for alleged Mafia links, wishes he had never become involved in politics. And Pope John Paul II may well wish he had not got involved with Mr Andreotti.

If he could have foreseen his future troubles, Mr Andreotti told a Portuguese Catholic radio station, he would have said "no, thanks", a half-century ago, when Alcide De Gasperi, Italy's post-war leader, asked him to join the Christian

Democrats. Rather than become a politician, he would have pursued a career as a canon lawyer or a doctor, the Life Senator said.

The Pope, meanwhile, has been criticised for inviting Mr Andreotti to address a health-care conference at the Vatican, during which the two were photographed chatting and shaking hands. On Tuesday, a university student who was reading a prayer at a papal Mass departed from his text and quoted the words of Aldo

Moro, the murdered former prime minister, in describing Mr Andreotti. In a letter written from captivity before he was killed by Red Brigades guerrillas in 1978, Moro said: "He was indifferent, bloodless, absent, closed in his shadowy scheme of glory."

The unidentified student continued: "One can be grey, Senator Andreotti, but honest; grey but good; grey but full of

fervour – but this is what you lack, human fervour." The Pope did not respond, and continued with his Mass. John Major also showed no reaction.

After two weeks of factory farms and market-economy lessons from his Chinese and Vietnamese comrades, Fidel Castro toured the huge Cu Chi tunnel network where Viet Cong guerrillas hid during the Vietnam war. Wearing a soft cap and a guerrilla-style keffiyeh around his neck, the Cuban

leader spent an hour hearing how the tunnels were dug in the 1960s, and became a launching point for attacks on Saigon. Mr Castro tried to squeeze into a few tunnels, but didn't get very far. In a guest book, he wrote that the tunnels were an example of man's endurance in the face of aggression.

Imelda Marcos wants a reconciliation with the former president Corazon Aquino. The former first lady of the Philippines says the feud between her

family and that of Benigno Aquino, Mrs Aquino's assassinated husband, has lasted too long. In fact, she says, it has provoked the gods to strike the Philippines with numerous natural calamities.

"We are displeasing the gods because we are not giving eternal rest to the dead," Mrs Marcos said, referring to her late husband Ferdinand and to continued suspicion that he had ordered Aquino's killing.

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Question: who is Odette's alter ego?

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For further details of this show, please call the booking office on 0171 960 4242.



Tomorrow: Win tickets for The Magic Flute

IN BRIEF  
China hits out at US 'meddling'  
Peking — China lashed the United States for "malicious" meddling in its internal affairs after Washington criticised the jailing of the pro-democracy dissident Wei Jingsheng, writes Teresa Poole. The strongly-worded statement suggests that China may feel confident enough to proceed with other dissident trials, including that of Wang Dan, one of the student leaders of the 1989 democracy movement, who has been in detention for more than six months without charge.

Iraqi olive branch

New York — In a move to end isolation, President Saddam Hussein has approved a secret Pentagon mission to Iraq in search of the remains of the first American pilot shot down in the 1991 Gulf War, the New York Times reported. Reuter

Jet-crash clue

Verona — Engine failure could have caused the crash of a Romanian airliner in northern Italy which killed all 49 people on board, an Italian government official said. Reuter

President cleared

Bogota — A congressional committee voted to clear Colombia's President Ernesto Samper of possible impeachment on charges that he authorised the receipt of millions of dollars in Cali cartel drug money to help win last year's election. Reuter

Death on safari

Ongadouong — A British woman, Audrey O'Neill, 55, may have starved to death last April after her Land Rover ran out of fuel in a game reserve in Burkina Faso, west Africa. Only her skeleton remained. AP

Call to Libya

Tunis — A US State Department official, Robert Pelletreau, urged Libya to resume contacts with the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on ways to end sanctions over the bombing of a Pan American airliner over Lockerbie. Reuter

Bulgarian rhapsody

Sofia — A married man and his lover who stole away to a Bulgarian holiday cottage for a romantic evening decided to join the party when they heard five-leaf music in a nearby house. Inside, they found their spouses locked in an adulterous embrace. The two unfaithful wives attacked each other with garden hoses and had to be separated by their husbands. Reuter



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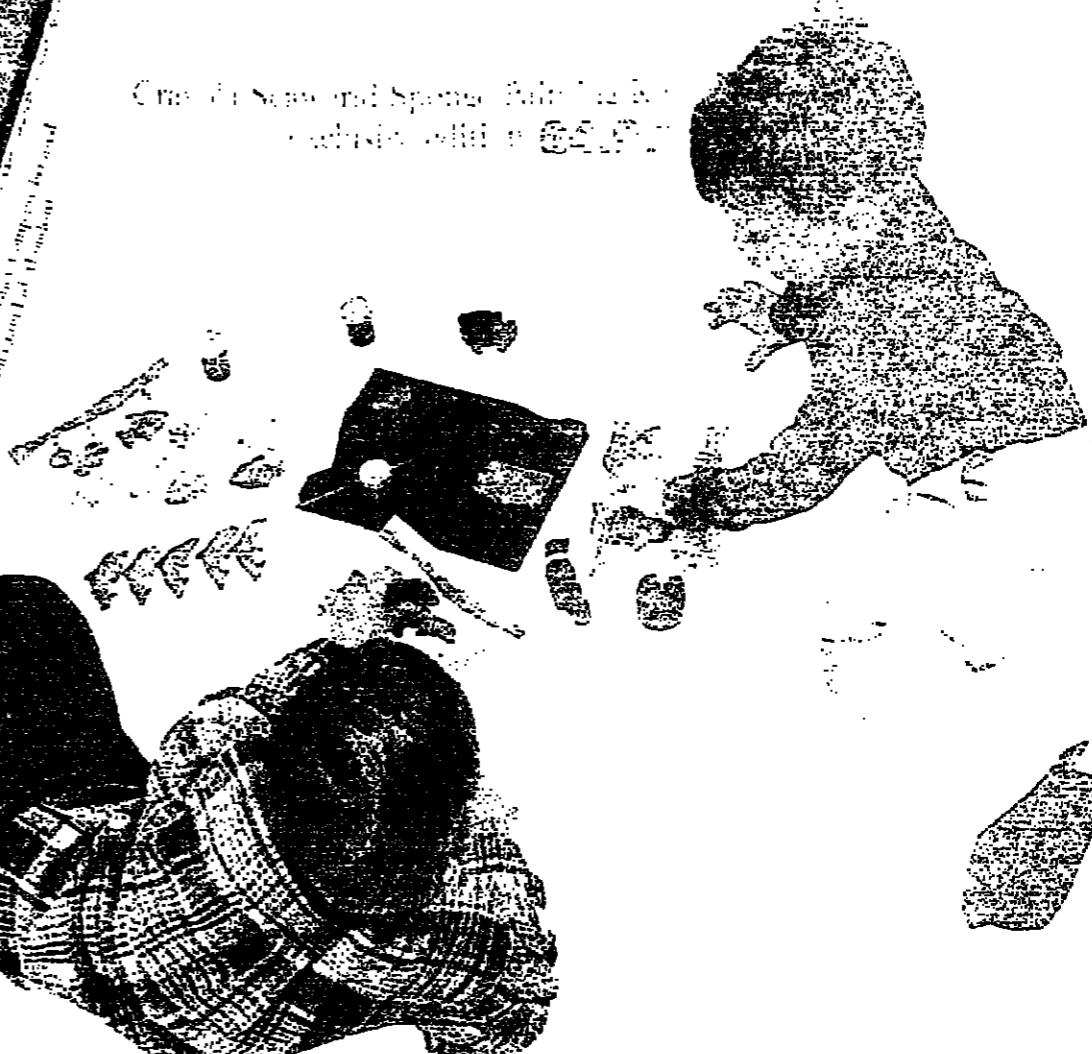
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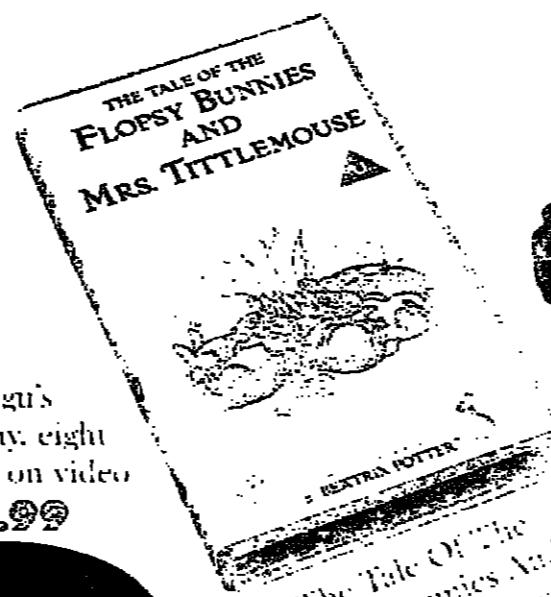
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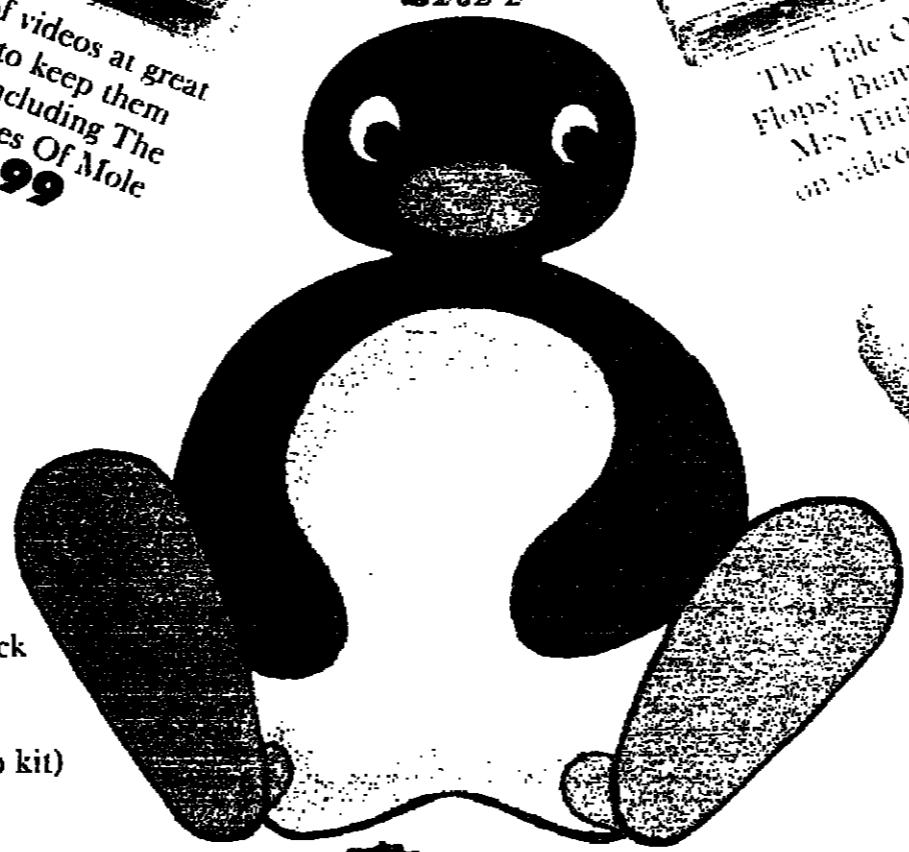


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## obituaries/gazette

# Evangeline Bruce

Evangeline Bruce appeared to emerge straight from the pages of a *roman à clef*, alas never written. Intelligent, beautiful, mysterious, ethereal, she was impossibly perfect as an ambassador, yet would often disappear from her own parties. Charmingly seductive and quietly amusing, she knew exactly what she wanted and achieved it. Famous as one of the best-dressed women in the world and the Georgetown hostess *par excellence*, she overcame the most terrible experience that could ever befall a mother, the virtual certainty that her daughter had been murdered. And at the end of her life, just before losing her sight, she completed a historical biography which enjoyed great success, both in the review columns and in the best-seller lists.

Evangeline Bell and her sister Virginia – the author Virginia Surtees – were the daughters of Edward Bell, an American career diplomat. When he was *en poste* in Peking, Evangeline's nanny used to take her for walks along the Great Wall of China. Her father died when she was still a child, but the peripatetic existence continued because her English mother, Etelka, married the British diplomat Sir James Dodds in 1927.

Evangeline already spoke perfect French when she went to Radcliffe in 1937, where she first got to know the historian Arthur Schlesinger. In 1942, she was recruited by the Office of Strategic Services to work in London. She was given the fearful responsibility of creating convincing aliases for agents parachuted into France, then making sure that there were no inconsistencies in their forged documents. This work brought her in touch with her future husband, David Bruce, whom General 'Wild Bill' Donovan had appointed as head of the London headquarters.

Bruce, some 20 years older, was a handsome and distinguished Virginian of great charm, a natural part of the circle which the journalist Joseph Alsop later termed 'the Wasp Ascendancy'. He had drifted apart from his first wife, Ailsa Mellon, the sister of Paul Mellon, but managed to remain on good relations with her family and, when Andrew Mellon created the National Gallery in Washington, Bruce became the first president. Mellon had also helped Bruce resurrect his family fortunes, first with a wedding gift of one million dollars, which Bruce invested most successfully, then with business con-

tacts, which led to directorships with blue chip companies.

David Bruce landed in Normandy with Donovan on D-Day plus one. And, as might be expected of a Princeton friend of Scott Fitzgerald, he 'liberated' the Ritz Hotel at the end of August 1944 with Ernest Hemingway and his gang of highly irregular partisans. Evangeline did not join him until a few weeks later, when she was given a tour of Paris on the back of a US army motorbike.

The following year, she and David Bruce were married, and in 1947 she accompanied him back to Paris when he was appointed to oversee the Marshall Plan in France. The Bruces lived in a beautiful apartment which had belonged to the Princesse de Lamballe in the rue de l'Isle but, as their family grew, it became too small. Bruce returned one day, to announce that he had found a much larger place. Evangeline asked where it was. 'On the avenue d'Iena,' he replied. It was the residence of the United States ambassador, a post which he had been offered that day.

Bruce was a very popular ambassador with the French, mainly because he understood their sensitivities after the defeat of 1940 and the Occupation. Jean Monnet paid him the ultimate tribute when he described him as 'a deeply civilised man' with 'rare foresight and good faith' who 'does not think of his country in terms of domination'. But Bruce's popularity was also in a large part due to the success of Evangeline as ambassador. Nearly 50 years later, French ministers from the period would immediately respond to the mention of her name with: 'Ah, la charmante Madame Bruce!'

So great was her success in Paris that she had to reject scores of would-be lovers, but always with a tact and wit that the French admired and appreciated. Couturiers vied to dress her and every fashion magazine longed to photograph her. Dior even created a special range of maternity clothes for her. But Evangeline's greatest friends were by no means the richest. Intelligent and amusing characters, especially the outrageous Marie-Louise Bousquet, were more to her taste. Her circle was also increased because her sister Virginia was then the wife of Ashley Clarke, the British Minister in Paris after the Liberation.

Bruce, from his position of unusual influence, greatly encouraged moves towards a European Community begun by

Monnet and Robert Schuman. He became a close friend of Conrad Adenauer, and so it was a natural development when, in 1957, Bruce became US Ambassador to Bonn. Four years later, he was translator to London as Ambassador to the Court of St James, where he and Evangeline hosted President John F. Kennedy. John F. Kennedy loved Bruce's gossipy accounts of the Profumo scandal. In 1970, when Bruce's time came to an end, they took the most handsome set in Albany, which had belonged to Lord Melbourne.

That year saw a return to Paris for the 'Vietnam' peace talks, and three years later, Bruce, although a long-standing Democrat, was chosen by President Nixon as the man to play the 'China card' as ambassador in Peking. For Evangeline, this was a curious and in some ways disappointing, return to her childhood, even though she did not waste a moment in studying Chinese art.

The next appointment, in 1974, as ambassador to NATO in Brussels, was the time of their greatest sadness. Their daughter, Alexandra, known as Sasha, married a Greek, Marios Michaelides. On 7 November 1975, Sasha was found shot in the head, lying under a tree at the Bruce family estate in Virginia. The house had been looted. She died two days later. Investigations could not establish for sure whether her death had been suicide or murder. Michaelides was later charged with murder and theft, but he escaped back to Greece and there avoided extradition to the United States.

The shock of Sasha's death was made infinitely worse by the media. The tone of the lurid and speculative coverage suggested that the press were interested primarily in destroying the image of the perfect couple. The episode caused lasting damage to both parents. David Bruce died two years later. Evangeline, determined to bring some good out of it, set up and funded a charity in Sasha's name to help troubled young people, a cause for which Sasha herself had worked at Radcliffe.

Evangeline Bruce might have been remembered by the world mainly for superficial characteristics: her tall, elegant figure, her inspired dress sense, her gentle, husky, seductive voice, her famous parties in Washington and London; yet she loathed being described as a society hostess, and accepted the term 'saloniste' with resignation. Any *grande dame* mystery which she maintained was mainly a line of defence for

someone who was still quite shy and had always needed a degree of privacy. She had not just a natural generosity, but also a talent for friendship. She used to take a house in Tuscany each summer with her old friend Marietta Tree to entertain mutual friends. After Marietta's death in 1991, Evangeline Bruce continued the tradition, with house-parties in Italy or France with friends such as Ludovic and Moira Kennedy, Lord and Lady Jenkins of Hillhead, Sir Nicholas and Lady Henderson, Lord and Lady Weinfeld, Edna O'Brien, the Arthur Schlesinger. But this year the publication and success of her book *Napoleon and Josephine: an improbable marriage* prompted many who had not taken her seriously to revise their opinions.

*Napoleon and Josephine* grew out of an earlier book, never published. The manuscript was about the year 1795 – to her, 'the most exciting year in history'. All Paris was celebrating the end of the Terror, in a mood of excitement and licentiousness; while, in the new liberalised economy, huge fortunes were being made in speculations and army contracts. 'The contracts could be for anything, from oats to cavalry sabres,' she wrote, 'and as like as not, carried off by a woman wearing flesh-coloured tights and diamonds on her toes.' The degree of influence wielded by women at this time was astonishing; and Bruce, who had watched the exercise of power over the years from an ideal position, was fascinated by the subject. Her descriptions of the Parisian social and political scene – from Thermidor to Waterloo – are so sure, so vivid, one almost feels she had lived through it.

She had just finished the book when she woke up one morning having completely lost her sight. Whatever the turmoil caused by this cruel blow, she never complained except to say what a bore it was.

Antony Beevor  
and Antoinette Cooper

Perhaps to some who did not know Evangeline Bruce she gave the impression of aloofness and even of unpredictability, writes Sir Nicholas Henderson. This was not on account of her presence, which was imposing, even awesome, but of a certain kind of shyness and lack of self-assurance, remarkable in someone of whom it could be said that she had everything: looks, intelligence, taste, wealth and a capacity for friendship. There is no word for her ap-



Photograph: Hutton Deutsch

pearance other than beautiful; and so too was the way she dressed and decorated her rooms. She had an Edwardian, Boldini-like elegance which was nevertheless up-to-date: wide-brimmed hats, flowing scarves, tailor-made suits, romantic evening dresses alternating with trouser-suits and short skirts; her colours were pearl, grey-blue and cream, not used sparingly but suffused mystically. John Fowler curtains dressed her windows. Everything was the result of an acute and discriminating visual sense. In the way she dressed, decorated and conducted her life she was not a Bohemian, but nor was she conventional; she was original, and possessed of a strong sense of creativity and merriment.

Yet it would be misleading to give the impression that she was only interested in the look of things. She had an acute intelligence and a lifelong interest in ideas and literature. For some dozen years she beavered away

unobtrusively at research that led to *Napoleon and Josephine*. Although too difficult to take part herself in discussion there was nothing she liked more than to be present when her friends were talking about serious subjects, for her preference was that the French were better at this than the Anglo-Saxons; she thought this was true of most things they did. She spoke French perfectly and was an excellent linguist, even succeeding in learning Chinese when *en poste* in Peking.

The impression of Vangie that evoked such love is of some light-winged dryad, difficult to catch or pin down, but inextinguishable in the heart or the mind's eye.

Evangeline Bell, *ambassadress and author; born London 1918; married 1945 David Bruce (died 1977; two sons, and one daughter deceased); died Washington DC 12 December 1995.*

## Professor Hugh Clegg

Hugh Clegg was the most influential British scholar of industrial relations at a time when his subject dominated the economic and political life of Britain. He not only immeasurably improved the contemporary understanding of industrial relations problems, but he also used the opportunity offered by a new university to build for the subject an enduring tradition of internationally outstanding teaching and research.

The son of a Methodist minister, he went to Kingswood School, Bath, going on to Magdalen College, Oxford, just before the Second World War. He then served five years in the Army as a telephone engineer before returning to Oxford. After taking the best degree of his year, he was encouraged by Professor G.D.H. Cole to study industrial relations. The subject appealed to his rebellious and egalitarian temperament.

He joined Nuffield College,

then in its infancy, and became a Fellow in 1949.

There he started a 20-year academic partnership with Alan Flanders,

a pre-war trade-union activist

whose later theoretical writings were to be highly influential.

As well as running a

legendary seminar series to-

gether, they edited *The System*

of *Industrial Relations in Great Britain* (1953), which broke

new ground in its far-ranging

overview of collective bargaining.

Meanwhile, Clegg wrote a

succession of studies of na-

tionalised industries, employers' orga-

nisations, industrial democ-

racy, and trade union officers,

which explored the unity in-

stitutional detail of industrial rela-

tions. He embarked upon the

authoritative *A History of British*

*Trade Unions*, of which the first

volume was published in 1964;

the second and third volumes

had to wait for his retirement.

Industrial relations were, by the 1960s, becoming a source of national concern. Clegg's clear, retentive, and independent mind made him a natural can-

didate for the many boards of

inquiry favoured for problem-

solving in those more tolerant

times. Through his work on the

railways, the docks, shipping,

and the car industry he earned

respect as an incisive question-

er who would boil down messy

evidence into a lucid report.

Clegg was an obvious ap-

pointee to the Royal Com-

mission on 'Trade Unions and

Employers' Associations' set up

in 1965 by a Labour government

seeking legislative solutions to

the 'strike problem'. He en-

sured that an unprecedented

programme of research was

commissioned. Then, when the

majority of the Commission

appeared to be stumbling to-

wards legal sanctions aimed at

strikers, he drafted a powerful

counter-report which won over

the majority. Strikes, it argued,

were a consequence of poor

management, not of democratic

stewardship. Employers

should recognise that the in-

ustrial agreements they had

relied on should, in much of

industry, give way to what would

now be called enterprise bar-

gaining. It was an analysis that

politicians rejected but which

subsequent events have over-

whelmingly vindicated.

Clegg's time on the Royal

Commission coincided with

his being a founder member of the

National Board for Prices and

Incomes. There his lasting con-

tribution was to insist on enquiry

by case-study, marshalling an

army of academic field-workers

to explore, by talking to the men

and women at the grass-roots,

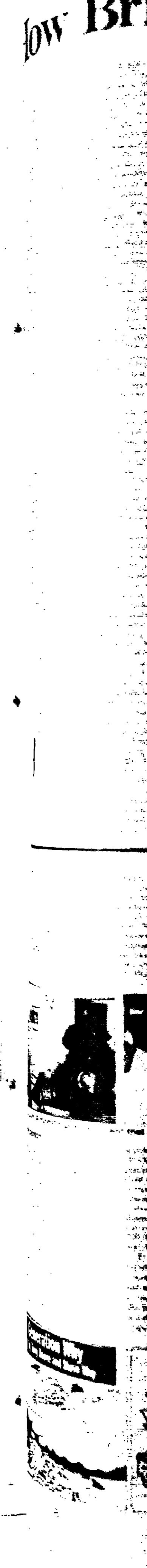
the grubby facts of labour man-

agement. He wrote the lessons

up in a book characteristically

entitled *How to Run an Incomes*

*Policy, and Why We Made Such*



*Mess of the Last One* (1971). When, in 1979, James Callaghan persuaded him to settle the 'Winter of Discontent' public service disputes by chairing the Commission on Pay Comparability, he followed up with a similarly thoughtful voluntary report which remains a remarkable analysis of public service pay policy.

He left Oxford in 1967 to become Professor of Industrial Relations at the new Warwick University. Among the mud and wooden huts he played a major part in creating what has become the most successful of Britain's post-war universities. Warwick's strength in social science and business studies owes much to the research environment he established: industrial relations grew rapidly as a part of this when the (then) Social Science Research Council set up its Industrial Relations Research Unit with him as Director, soon to be joined by Alan Flanders and George Bain. His graduate course in the subject remains internationally outstanding.

Two complete rewritings of what was now his own textbook were published in 1970 and 1979. He handed on the direction of the unit in 1974, and in 1979 retired from his chair to return to his *history*. Long into his retirement his bicycle kept him in close touch with his empire of enthusiastic researchers.

An almost truculently mod-

est man, Clegg avoided the

publicity that the circumstances of industrial conflict offered him. While forming close friendships with many of the employers and trade union of-

ficers with whom he worked, he mistrusted politicians. He won the devotion of generations of students and colleagues by the care and loyalty he gave to them.

When his remorseless pencil had scarred an essay or manuscript beyond recognition, he was always ready to fake the author off to the pub to restore their self-esteem.

As a scholar Clegg was accused of being obsessed with date to the neglect of theory. History will show the contrary. He was impatient of dateless theorising, but his own analyses – of industrial democracy, the role of management, bargaining structure, trade unionism – are incomparable. Political fashions have battered collective bargaining beyond recognition in the years since Clegg retired. But when future generations seek to repair the excessive individualisation of working life, they will work with the understanding he has

After the Scarman report, it became a safer and more harmonious place. So what has gone wrong? **Paul Vallely** reports

# How Brixton became a byword for disorder

The three days of rioting that engulfed Brixton in April 1981 shocked the nation. The police were faced by mobs – throwing petrol bombs and attacking them with crowbars – which they could not control or even contain. It was unlike anything Britain had seen since the 1930s.

Crowds of young rioters – mainly black, though with some white youths involved – attacked police, fire fighters, and even ambulances. Cars were set on fire. Property was destroyed on a large scale. More than 320 people were injured, including more than 200 police officers, in pitched battles along what came to be known as the Railton Road "front-line". Even today those who participated refer to it as "the uprising".

Brixton became a byword for a new disorder. It was not always thus. The first recorded mention of the place was in 1067 when Brixstane, the north-east Hundred of Surrey, was an uninhabited moor. It was undeveloped until the early 19th century, when large suburban housing began to be erected along the country lanes. As the railways came, so the gaps were filled with denser, more humble housing for clerks and artisans.

But by end of the century Brixton's character began to change in a defining way. The large, older homes became lodging houses, particularly for people working in the theatre. (Brixton was the home of Dan Leno, Fred Karno and the music hall and circus performer Thomas Major-Ball, father of the present prime minister, who spent his early days in a flat there.) The network of rooms for board was the perfect reception for migrant workers and immigrants; first came the Irish, and then, beginning in 1948, the West Indian community.

The process has continued apace. As with all influxes of immigrants, each new group gravitated to the spot where their fellow countrymen had made their home. By the 1960s enough of a sense of community had developed for local people successfully to resist plans by Lambeth Council for a large scale redevelopment of the area. In the mid-Seventies a number of neighbourhood housing schemes were started instead, and migrants from other countries began to replace the departed Irish, who had gone up in the world. In came the Portuguese, Cypriot, Maltese, Chilean and Vietnamese – most of whom remain Brixton, though popularly categorised as a black

ghetto (30 per cent of the population is black) became a patchwork of communities. The violence that erupted there in 1981 could, therefore, be blamed on any number of factors. The critics were not slow to select their favourites. There was heavy-handed policing. Or the high unemployment and the government policies that produced it. There was the legacy of social and economic neglect of inner cities from previous administrations. Or agitation by outside extremists. There was the weak parental control and home discipline in West Indian families. And there was the whole issue of the incompatibility of the races – the Monday Club immediately called for the repatriation of 50,000 immigrants a year and the repeal of all race relations laws.

There was no denying the problems between the black community and the police. The Metropolitan Police had persistently been accused of harassment. Under the notorious "sus" law, police were allowed to apprehend citizens on the mere suspicion of intent to commit a crime. Only two weeks before, riot police had stopped and searched 3,000 people in central Brixton as part of Operation Swamp against street crime.

But the Brixton riots were a sign of the times rather than the place. Riots followed soon after in Toxteth (where they were even more violent), Manchester, Southall, Reading, Liverpool, Hull and Preston. The Government's response was three-fold. The Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, promised better anti-riot gear for the police. The Environment Secretary, Michael Heseltine, went to Toxteth and established an inner-city task force, later promising it would have £90m to spend nationwide. And the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, set up an inquiry into the riots chaired by the distinguished judge Lord Scarman.

Six months later the Scarman report concluded that ethnic minorities had suffered disproportionately from the burdens that afflict all inner city residents. "Unemployment and poor housing bear on them very heavily," he said. The education system was not well adapted to their needs. They perceived concealed discrimination in many areas. They did not feel politically secure. And some resorted to crime, particularly street crime.

**The first Brixton riots were a sign of the times rather than the place. Others followed soon after**



## Lambeth: then and now

**Population**  
1981: 246,000, of which 25% belonged to non-white ethnic groups  
Now: 258,500, of which 30% belong to non-white ethnic groups

**Unemployment**  
1981: 10%  
Now: 13.6%

**Housing**  
1981: 8,250 households lacked one or more basic amenity  
Now: 3,529 households lack one or more basic amenity

1981: 22% owner occupied; 33% rented privately; 45% rented from a local authority  
Now: 36.2% owner occupied; 26.9% rented privately; 36.9% rented from a local authority

**Social services expenditure**  
1981: £117 per capita  
Now: £363 per capita

Source: Lambeth Borough Council, the Scarman report (1981)

youth off the streets – many of which, with their multicultural and anti-racist rhetoric, laic themselves open to Tory jibe about loony-left councils.

Not that the leftist Lambeth Council has covered itself in glory in handling the deep-seated problems of Brixton. A major collapse of services – in education, housing and street services – has occurred amid accusations of incompetence and corruption. Housing is still poor on the estates where the black population largely lives. Schools' performance is very poor compared with the national average; the Dick Shepherd school, on Brixton's Fulcrum Hill estate, was closed recently after it achieved only a quarter of the national average in GCSE passes.

The Government seems to have no strategy to handle this regeneration programmes – which are short-term, highly focused and quick spending – cannot combat pressures of this scale. The area does not have the people or infrastructure to put regeneration cash to good use – the South Thames Training and Enterprise Council collapsed in bankruptcy. The whole area will continue to sink, many observers believe, until the situation gets out of control.

If it has not done so already, this week's violence was not as intense as that of 1981 but it may be just as serious. For it points to the heart of the problem of Britain's inner cities today. And it is not one of race but of economics.

Brixton today has far more mixed marriages than it had at the time of the 1981 riots. Residents speak of a general lack of racial hostility on the streets. But some 28 per cent of Brixton's blacks are unemployed and – like their white counterparts in Leeds or Luton, or their Asian contemporaries in Bradford – seem increasingly to feel that there is no route out of unemployment. Such perceptions create new realities.

The rhetoric of race may be there – as may the outside agitators, the criminal gangs and the black separatist extremists, all of whom have been mentioned in the media in the quest for scapegoats. Such factors are easy to isolate and to hunt. But the real problem is the young people on the streets who are not engaged in society – through the schools, through the economy, or through the family – and whose disastrous pattern of alienation may only be part of a chain of violent reactions to which society is yet to find an answer.

**This week's violence points to the heart of the problem. And it is not one of race, but of economics**

street disorder and having a go at the police," Lord Scarman said. Relationships between blacks and the police improved. Brixton was still a high-crime area but now no different from any other inner-city area, said a local police chief. And most people accepted that things really had changed.

Si Paul Condon's recent attempt to do some preliminary community work before Operation Eagle Eye revealed as much. He may have bungled it by including in his letter to black community leaders the assertion that most muggers in London are black. But his attempt to bring the community on-side before the exercise began is in stark contrast to the complete lack of consultation before the massive Operation Swamp exercise in 1981.

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You must remember this. A kiss is just a kiss. And a headscarf is just a headscarf. Unless, of course, the embrace (registering about 5.8 on the passion scale) is the first recorded between Her Majesty the Queen and her husband, and the headscarf is tied, contrary to the dictates of both fashion and etiquette, neatly over the crown. Well what is a monarch to do when the wind is up, and an unsecured crown could go hurtling across the road?

These pictures, world exclusives as we modestly say in the trade, are of a domesticated Queen on the royal yacht *Britannia*, which is the subject of a BBC1 documentary at Christmas. The kiss, like all kisses, is unique; but I confidently predict that the bejewelled crown jewels upon the royal head will spawn a thousand imitators. I can see *Rory Bremner* searching through his wardrobe even now.



Exclusive! A majestic smacker ... and that handy jewel-saving scarf

One person considerably less keen to hang on to her ceremonial jewellery is Danielle Mitterrand, the wife of the former French president. Her collection went under the hammer this week at *Ena Tajan's* annual pre-Christmas sale at the glitzy George V hotel in Paris. Auctioned by Jacques Tajan himself with a Gallic flourish of a highly elegant hammer, the hauls – in 42 lots – raised 1.5m francs for the human rights charity, *France Liberté*, she founded in 1986. This was a good deal less than the estimated prices had suggested, however, which might just have had something to do with the questionable taste of many of the items.

There was, for instance, a gold

watch, pen and pencil set, with shocking pink crocodile strap, which just crawled up to 9,500 francs – less than the lowest estimate; there were lumps of amber in settings that resembled armour plating, and the starring item, a Gerard diamond-studded collar, bracelet and ear-ring set expected to fetch up to 500,000 francs, stuck stubbornly below 400,000.

To rescue Mme Mitterrand's reputation, it should be said that the jewels were not strictly hers, but ones she was given during her 14 years as France's first lady. This poses, though, the further question of her right to sell them. Noblesse, we shall respectfully assume, obliges.

There was, for instance, a gold



Sir Edward Heath knows how to turn a Beethoven tune to his advantage. Sir Edward is giving the opening address at the Beethoven Marathon, a 48-hour non-stop session of music in Bonn tonight. After discoursing on the composer's greatness, deafness, genius and various other attributes, our increasingly Tory-sceptic former Prime Minister will tell his audience that Beethoven's music evoked liberty and fraternity, and that these insights must inform our policy-making, concluding: "Let me reassure you about one thing – you must not be concerned on account of the mixed signals coming from the United Kingdom about our place in Europe. We trade massively and overwhelmingly with Europe, and we might even start to learn some European languages one day." Those who have heard Sir Edward speak French or German will know that day cannot come too soon.

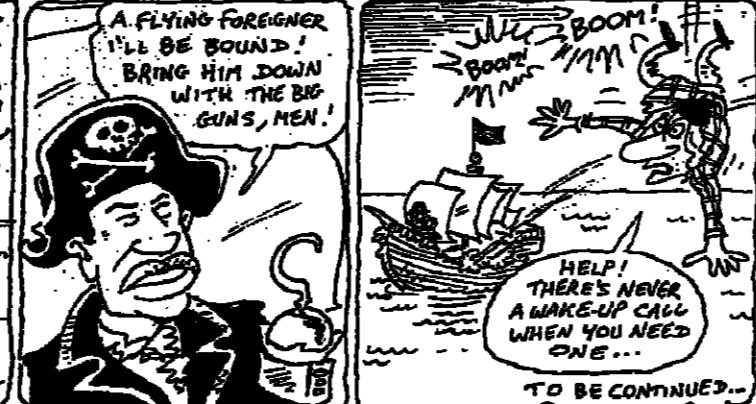
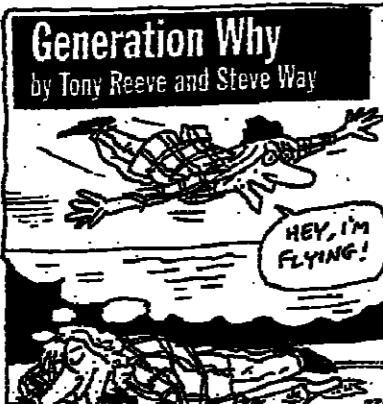
It is the activities of one Michael Heseltine MP that were monitored more closely. That is the decree of the Labour Party, at least, which has asked Giles Radice to be on a new public services select committee, whose members will be announced next week. It is expected that Mr Radice will chair the body, unofficially dubbed the Heze Committee. "The idea," says a source, "will be to look very closely at Civil Service accountability. Budget cuts and the aftermath of the Scott Inquiry will be priorities, but the

agenda will be broad." The Sun King will have to build his empire warily.

Lord Menushin, the violin virtuoso, should be aware of the new brutalism at the Royal Philharmonic, the orchestra of which he is president. On Wednesday night the RPO chairman, John Bimson, sacked managing director Paul Findley and his well-respected publicity director, Ewen Balfour. These things happen, though quite why they should happen to a pair who over the past year had got the orchestra a record label deal, a contract with Classic FM, a residency at the Royal Albert Hall and another in Nottingham is a mystery. But on this occasion things happened with a vengeance. The pair were given an hour to leave the building, and when Balfour went back that evening to collect some clothes he found the locks had been changed. In the arts, as we in the press are regularly lectured, people at least know how to treat their colleagues with dignity. I leave it to Messrs Findley and Balfour to draw their own conclusions.

The prisoner who tried to bite through his handcuffs and ended up admitting criminal damage to police property at Tewkesbury magistrates' court this week may not have chosen quite so desperate a remedy as at first appears. According to the British Dental Association, such a method of escape can be successful with teeth nurtured by a lifetime of the correct vitamins. "You can mark metal with your teeth," a spokesman says, "and if you hit hard enough you could certainly dent the handcuff or even break its hinge." So if you're set on a life of crime, keep taking the fluoride tablets.

Eagle Eye



# INDEPENDENT

FOUNDED 1986

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## Bulls in Brixton's china shop

Brixton does not need people like Rudy Narayan. It is a sensitive place where much time, effort and money has gone into healing the wounds of past disturbances and injustice. There are still a few people, as Wednesday night's riot demonstrated, who are easily encouraged to lay waste a neighbourhood that already has enough problems.

In this situation, Mr Narayan and his ilk are a menace. Obsessed with an ideological-driven, two-dimensional view of the world that ranges black against white, authority against citizen, they seem unconcerned about the consequences of arousing hatred.

"The Brixton police are killers," Mr Narayan announced to the crowd on Wednesday. Here was a qualified lawyer, a champion of civil rights, acting as judge and jury on a case about which the facts have yet to be established fully. He also took it upon himself to deliver the sentence. The police, he said, "will not understand what they have done until one of them has been killed".

This type of language is all the excuse that a tiny minority needed to justify looting and rampaging through Brixton. The attack on PC John Tishaw, knocked off his motorcycle by a gang, might easily have led to his death.

This violence has served to obscure the genuine and justified unease about the case of Wayne Douglas, a black man who died last week in police custody in Brixton. His death requires an independent investigation. Local people are rightly suspicious of a police station in which many of them have little confidence. And their frustration is understandable: the death of Mr Douglas did not occupy many column inches until the riot pro-

pelled it into the national consciousness. So where does this leave us? Are we back to the days of April 1981, when there were several nights of rioting involving hundreds of people and Lord Scarman was despatched to investigate?

"No" is the short answer. Brixton has changed considerably. The Scarman report, written after the riots of the Eighties, criticised poor relations between the police and Brixton's black community. The police tried to mend fences. The Police Complaints Authority was set up along with police consultative committees for inner-city areas.

That said, relations are far from perfect. Many law-abiding black people felt branded as criminals when, earlier this year, Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, claimed that most muggings in London were committed by young black men. In Brixton, black people are five times as likely to be stopped and searched by police than whites.

But these continuing tensions neither explain nor condone what happened on Wednesday night. For a clue to what happened in Brixton, we should look beyond the race relations of south London to the streets of Bradford, Luton and Leeds. All these towns have in the past six months been the scene of serious disturbance.

The one element common to all is a sense of largely unemployed, bored young men. Aggressive and alienated, they range from Bradford's Asians to working-class whites in Leeds.

This hard core of discontented, aimless, unskilled men is a worrying side to Nineties Britain, where employers increasingly need highly skilled workers. As Brixton reminded us this week, we ignore them at our peril.

## 'Tis the season to be sensible

The season of good will and back-to-back summits is upon us. In the case of the European Union summit in Madrid, starting today, the overlap between summits and goodwill may be small.

Mr Major goes to Spain determined to impersonate Margaret Thatcher. A European single currency in 1999 is not only bad for me, he will tell the gathering, it is bad for all of you. And, what is more, the Conservative Party cannot accept the changes prescribed by the rest of you – more majority voting in Brussels, stronger foreign and security policy – to help the EU to embrace the former Soviet satellites to the east.

Mr Major may be right about European Monetary Union for the wrong reasons. About the rest of the Madrid agenda, he is not so right.

EU is first. What a tangle of half-truths, mis-statements and crushing ironies the debate about the single currency has become. On the one hand, we have the startling sight of Tory right-wingers cheering on the French trade unions in their battle against public-spending cuts and welfare reforms. Why? Because they see that the Juppé government is pursuing its Thatcherite agenda for European reasons: the need to squeeze the French economy into the debt and inflation rules for membership of the EMU club within two years.

On the other hand, we have pro-European progressives, social marketeers – from Labour Euro MPs to the 1968 rabble rouser Daniel Cohn Bendit – supporting the drive to a single currency over the heads of the French (and now Belgian) democ-

rats. This is very odd. The harsh EMU timetable will force many EU countries to hobble the welfare policies that have been the basis of their post-war social consensus. There may be arguments – and not just Thatcherite arguments – for boiling down the bloated public budgets of France, Belgium, Austria, Italy and so on. But in just two years? In the name of a single European currency, which already has little public support? And at a time when there are already German alarm bells tolling of European recession on the way?

The other argument expected in Madrid – over the agenda for next year's rolling conference on wider EU reforms – presents quite a different case. The ideas delivered to the summit by senior officials – and the separate but similar proposals from France and Germany – are hardly revolutionary. More majority voting by EU governments in Brussels? This is just an extension of what is already happening: it needs to be pushed through to prevent an 18- or 20-member Union from seizing up.

A stouter European foreign and security policy? This is more Euro-sensible than Euro-federal. Look at five criminally wasteful years in the Balkans. Honest argument about the scope and detail is possible, but not blanket insistence that nothing can be done to move EU foreign policy out of the talking shop.

The Prime Minister must not allow his hands to be hopelessly tied by his right wing. On EMU, he talks something close to sense. On the rest, he must avoid plunging Britain, once again, into pointless isolation.

## So ... is Angus Deayton an alien?



MILES KINGTON

Today I announce the publication of a book which I predict will turn out to be the best-seller of the 1995 Christmas season. It is called *Great Mysteries of 1995* and what it sets out to do, apart from make me a fortune and emulate such great money-spinners of the past such as *The Bermuda Triangle*, is simply to survey the great mysteries of 1995.

Here is a run-down of a few of the most baffling deals with in the book.

Whatever happened to crop circles?

All during the Eighties and Nineties there was an outbreak of attractive geometric patterns in British crop fields which caused something of a furore. Books, articles, television programmes flooded out on the subject. Now, nobody cares less about crop circles. What is the reason for this baffling lack of interest? Are the circles still appearing? Have they all gone somewhere else? Were they all hoaxes? Did we dream it all?

Where did Balti cooking come from? No Indian in Britain had ever heard of Balti cooking before it appeared. Nobody in India had ever heard of Balti cooking. Nobody in Britain knows where in India it comes from. Nobody, if pushed to it, can satisfactorily define Balti cooking. There

noxious Home Secretary in history? Is Angus Deayton really as dishy as he looks?

No, that's not the question. Angus Deayton does look a bit of a dish, but so would you if you sat between Ian Hislop and Paul Merton every week. The real question is: how do you pronounce his name and why is it spelt like that? Is he Deayton, as in Ohio, or is he Deeton, as in Mrs Beeton? And why is it spelt "Deay", when there is no other word in the English language with that combination of vowels? Does Angus Deayton in fact come from another planet where that spelling is common and where those looks are commonplace, and where it is actually thought funny to say things like: "And after that round Ian's team has an under-exposed 5, while Paul's team has surged into the lead with a well-developed 6"?

Does the Nobel Peace Prize exist or doesn't it?

This year's Nobel Peace Prize went to a British citizen, Joseph Rotblat, for his lifelong work campaigning against nuclear arms. Nobody can remember the last time this hugely prestigious award came to Britain. Yet nobody in the Government has even acknowledged the prize, let alone made a fuss of it. Why not? Why is the Government ashamed of seeing the Nobel Peace Prize come to Britain? Are they even now selling nuclear arms to Saddam Hussein? Is Joseph Rotblat actually from another planet altogether? Or, as seems more likely, is it the Tory government that has alien origins? *Great Mysteries of 1995* looks at all the angles.

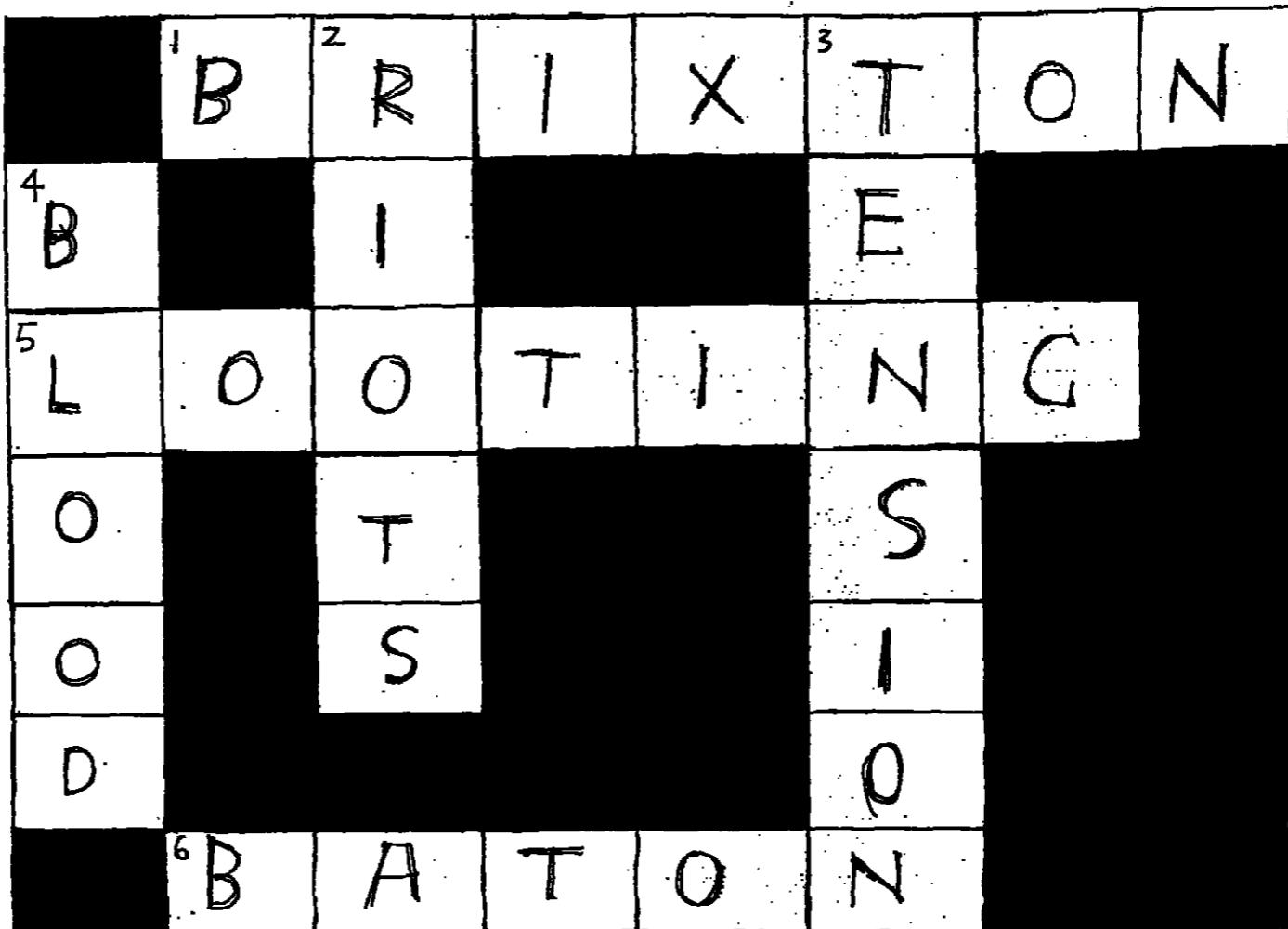
Was this the richest year on record for British water companies?

Nobody can remember a year in which profits, bonuses and fees raised so heavily on water companies in Britain. It was certainly the richest year since records began. Was this just a freak? In the words of the head of Yorkshire Water, is it a case that "Every 200 years or so there is a year so unpredictable that there is no earthly way of seeing it coming"? Or was there some murrain and not so palpable reason? Were there dark, unearthly forces at work?

Why on earth did anyone ever want the Beatles to get together again, now that we know what happens when they do?

The answer, according to *Great Mysteries of 1995*, is "God knows, but we won't make that mistake again".

### CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- Forward-looking, positive London suburb
- Popular take-away service
- Men's club

### DOWN

- Peaceful protests
- Atmosphere of mutual understanding
- Feature of London streets

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Feeling confused by the figures? Blame it on the drink

From Professor B. N. C. Prichard, FRCP

Sir: Now that the initial impact of the Secretary of State for Health's statement on the "sensible drinking" limits has passed, some points need to be made clear.

Stephen Dorrell has not raised the limits, but his remarks have been so interpreted. A distinguished patient of mine, a Fellow of the Royal Society, informed me today that 28 units a week was now "safe". Why the confusion?

The statement by the Secretary of State says that three to four drinks per day for men, two to three for women, is not a significant health risk, and a total of 28 drinks per week for men and 21 for women has therefore been understood as the new policy.

On the BBC's *World at One*, Mr Dorrell said that he was moving away from a weekly limit as this seemed to allow binge drinking, which was dangerous.

This hard core of discontented, aimless, unskilled men is a worrying side to Nineties Britain, where employers increasingly need highly skilled workers.

As Brixton reminded us this week, we ignore them at our peril.

suggest that alcohol problems in society rise in proportion to the overall level of consumption. These problems are by no means restricted to the strictly medical sphere.

A recent report from the Royal College of Physicians and the British Paediatric Association commented that many children are already adversely affected by their parents' drinking. Another recent report from an All Party Group of MPs quoted figures that alcohol is implicated in up to half of all crimes and even higher proportions of violent offences.

The statement by the Secretary of State says that three to four drinks per day for men, two to three for women, is not a significant health risk, and a total of 28 units a week has therefore been understood as the new policy.

On the BBC's *World at One*, Mr Dorrell said that he was moving away from a weekly limit as this seemed to allow binge drinking, which was dangerous.

This is an important point for him to have made, but I would have liked him to have made it clear that he was advising a maximum of four drinks a day for men, three for women, within the weekly limits of 21 and 14 drinks for men and women respectively.

My FRS patient is clearly not alone in believing that the high levels of consumption, in terms of the population average, of 28/21 drinks per week are now encouraging levels of consumption respectively.

This is the view that was conveyed by the media to the

general public. There is clearly a need for clarification.

Yours faithfully,

B. N. C. PRICHARD  
Chairman  
Institute of Alcohol Studies  
London, SW1

13 December

From Dr Eamonn Clarke

Sir: The Government has announced an increase in the recommended amounts of alcohol that adults can safely consume ("Doctors' fury over 'safe' drink limits", 13 December).

The Health Secretary's assertion that this change is in line with recent scientific evidence seems somewhat illogical. Stephen Dorrell himself in interview has said that the scientific studies have shown a slight reduction in the risk of heart disease to people consuming one glass of red wine a day. But this sort of cardio-protective drinking can safely be accomplished within the original guidelines.

The man and woman in the streets will deny that government guidelines make any difference to their drinking, but I suspect that this is like advertising, in that we all consciously deny taking any notice of these campaigns yet they have a demonstrable effect. The likely

outcome is that people will subconsciously feel that it is safe to drink more alcohol and will do so.

Yours faithfully,

EAMONN CLARKE  
Secretary, North-West Anglia GP Committee  
Wisech, Cambridgeshire

13 December

From Mr Paul Ashton

Sir: It is ironic that opposition to the new "safe" drinking limits should come from doctors ("Doctors' fury over 'safe' drink limits", 13 December).

It was after all, the research by Sir Richard Doll on the drinking habits and health of doctors which purported to show (statistically) that there were health benefits to be had from regular and "moderate" drinking of alcohol.

The real irony, however, is that it was the same Richard Doll who first produced statistical evidence in this country showing the relationship between smoking and cancer. Buried in that report was the fact that light smokers had lower morbidity and lower disability rates than non-smokers.

Perhaps, then, we might see the health minister recommend regular and moderate smoking?

Yours faithfully,

PAUL ASHTON  
Eastbourne, East Sussex

14 December

### The way to a riot-free city

From Sir Sigmund Sternberg

Sir: Nicholas Timmins has written a perceptive analysis ("London: the new melting pot of Europe", 13 December) of the report on the growing ethnic minorities in the capital produced by the London Research Centre and based on the 1991 census.

He suggests that London has adapted "remarkably well" and goes on to say that "only briefly has there been anything in London that could fairly be called race riots". By grim coincidence, the *Independent* this morning has as its main front-page headline "Riot flares on streets of Brixton", accompanied by a colour picture with the caption "Night of destruction".

The truth is that there is more xenophobia, racism and intolerance than we care to admit and that we are still a long way away from the unity in diversity which it is so important to create.

Herman Ouseley, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, is right to emphasise the social, cultural and economic aspects. There is also a religious dimension; it has been said that there must be understanding between the faiths before there can be understanding between the nations.

The International Council of Christians and Jews, which operates in 26 countries, including Britain, conducts important educational work as part of the interfaith dialogue.

It is a task that will need to be intensified if London is indeed to become a new type of city in Europe with the various groupings fully integrated and living together in peace and harmony.

Yours faithfully,  
SIGMUND STERNBERG  
Chairman  
International Council of Christians and Jews  
London, NW5

14 December

### Spare us the party police

From Mr Paul Staines

Sir: The Government's planned legislation against noise nuisance really is over the top ("Noisy neighbours face spot fines", 13 December). Not to be outdone, new Labour is promising legislation that could lead to seven-year jail sentences for offenders. The Government proposes that after 11pm, noise above 35 decibels will be an offence. If this legislation is passed, this will be the last time we can see the New Year with a bang without fear of puritanical party police.

Most people have the occasional late loud party on birthdays or New Year's Eve. The thrust of the proposed legislation is wrong: sanctions against persistent offenders are one thing, fines and confiscation of music systems are excessive against the occasional party-goer. All that is required is a bit more tolerance and common sense.

Politicians need to get some perspective and stop trying to control our lives down to the level of what time adults should be tucked up quietly in their beds. Yours faithfully,  
PAUL STAINES  
Campaign Director  
Freedom to Party Campaign  
London, SE16

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax 0171-286 2086; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Back issues of the *Independent* are available from Historic Newspapers, 0800 906609.

13 December

Throwing money at inner-city areas does not work, says David Robins. Rioting youths need smaller scale solutions

## Why did Brixton burn again?

It goes as if pre-scripted. In an inner-city neighbourhood, a youth suspected of a crime dies; or is mistreated, while in police custody. Masked youths take over the streets, burning and looting. It might be Los Angeles or Paris – this week it was Brixton. And equally predictably the headlines ask the question: where did it all go wrong?

Received wisdom in dealing with urban unrest has been that riots can be stopped by throwing money at grand regeneration schemes, launched at glitzy press conferences. Since the unrest in the 1980s the Brixton area has received grants of £100m. Some people have set up businesses, some have done well. Middle-class people have moved into the area, attracted by the tangible signs of investment and growth. All the signs of gentrification are seen in the streets of Brixton – yet 10 years after the last missile was thrown in anger, riots erupt again.

On Wednesday the Dog pub, which was one of the targets of the rioters in the 1980s and was refurbished as part of the regeneration process, was set on fire again. Expensive capital programmes in troubled inner-city areas can end up as empty shells of little use to anyone except as focuses for the destructive frustration of young urban youth. The uncomfortable message for the police and the politicians is that programmes for the inner cities, however well resourced, cannot afford to ignore or play down the difficulties caused by the nihilistic youths who are unemployed, marginalised, and involved in crime.

Despite all the money spent on urban regeneration, three out of four of ethnic minority men aged 18

to 25 in London are unemployed. One third of young urban males have criminal records. There is a strong association between crime and being male, young and from the inner city – and this group is also the most likely to become victims of crime. In some neighbourhoods the most likely perpetrators and the most likely victims will be young black males aged between 15 and 21.

In my own study of a high-crime neighbourhood a picture emerged of a group of alienated young men under pressure to survive by making a name for themselves and winning respect on the streets. In such a world a boy has to undergo a process of premature toughening. His first priority is not how to get on at school or learn to live in the family but to learn how to negotiate the unstable society of his peers. Among the young men I met were a small minority referred to by their peers as "evil people", for whom even with the benefit of hindsight prison seemed to be the only solution. Psychologists have often interpreted such traits of aggressive delinquent behaviour as part of a strategy to conceal a lack of self-esteem. This may be so but there are many who feel that misplaced leniency by the courts on these offenders and too much emphasis on understanding can be a serious impediment to community development.

Indeed, since the majority of young men in "City Challenge" areas remain unemployed and the power of hardened criminal elements appears to be growing, local people can become sceptical. Some even suspect the motive behind regeneration schemes: Are black people being set up to fail? they ask.

Following the riots of the summer

of 1981 there was a massive expansion in temporary training and employment programmes for young people. A host of wealth creation schemes were launched and appeals made to the hidden business potential of struggling inner-city people. Several symbols of these "inner-city initiatives" were razed to the ground during the uprising that swept Britain in the late summer of 1991. And the pattern was not confined to

Britain. In October 1990 the high-rise suburb of Vaux-en-Velin in Lyons, which has a predominantly ethnic minority population and whose own regeneration programme has been proclaimed a symbol of hope in the face of crime, racism, and unemployment, was engulfed in bloody clashes between police and local youth and the gleaming new community sports centre was attacked. In April 1992, following

widespread anger over the Rodney King affair, a group of youths burnt down the Watts LA shopping mall and other products of 20 years of community development.

Politically these riots are in reality failed uprisings. As one participant once explained to me, "We are soldiers. This is a war". But the uprisings lack political leadership. So they become only the most dramatic and visible sign of the protracted

would existing schemes work better if more cash was made available over a longer period? Some believe that the best way to combat drugs and crime is not through costly programmes but through encouraging individual self-help, like the work done by the Prince's Trust. And then there are those, not all cynics, that have concluded that nothing works and that all of the ineffective attempts at constructive solutions have proved that youths who are heavily involved in crime and too intent on ruining their futures too hopelessly misdirected to be reached.

The degree of nihilism on the streets adds weight to the "nothing works" theory, but I have come across evidence that less spectacular incremental gains can be reached. For example, Jerry was constantly in trouble with the law, and was expelled from school. But he retained a kind of incurable over-optimism common among some inner-city youngsters about the good times round the corner. The trouble is that the only way to get there seemed to be by "doing crime, going robbing and all this". He was fortunate to attend a positive job training programme run by a local voluntary agency and today he runs a successful electric repair business. Jerry explains that his transformation is because one day he decided to make something of himself instead of becoming a crime statistic. Of course such young people may not succeed, but in the meantime work rather than crime becomes the main structure in their lives.

The writer is the author of *Turned Visions: crime and conflict in the inner city*. OUP 1992



Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Those who live and work in Brixton see the underlying problems every day. Mike Rahman (left) and Mike Harry give two points of view

## A dream unfulfilled

Rioting is not a solution to the long-term problems of black people – or anyone else. But it seems to be the only opportunity that people have got at the moment to express the way they are being treated as second-class citizens of this country. There is so much pent-up frustration and isolation. People round here are, for instance, still very angry about the comments made by London's Chief Commissioner, Paul Condon, linking black people to muggings.

As far as the police go, there is a lot of work to be done to re-educate them to understand that they are not a power to themselves: their actions must be accountable.

But anger at the police is coupled with deprivation and lack of opportunities. There are deep resentments about the lack of jobs and social and recreational facilities in Brixton. No one wants to see a repeat of 1981 or 1985 riots. And to prevent such a recurrence, this Government gave £37.5m as a grant to set up Brixton City Challenge in 1993, to regenerate the area I am a director – one of four who represent community organisations – on the City Challenge. It had a grand founding vision:

"Our programme will place people and communities at the

heart of the initiative. The investment of £189m will create around 1,650 new jobs and it is estimated that more than 2,500 local people will attain recognised qualifications. Communities will flourish in good homes, be healthy and safe, and participate in the changes that will take place. Young people, will grow up in an attractive and prosperous environment, and will build further prosperity in Brixton, Lambeth in London and further afield."

That vision is no longer there. Despite the investment, local people have not benefited, because the local communities and existing small businesses – the people who live and work in Brixton – have never been at the heart of the regeneration process. It didn't have to be like this: at a seminar I went to in Birmingham two weeks ago, I was very impressed by the involvement of the communities there in their City Challenge.

And the Challenge itself is dogged by inefficiency. I know of important, useful community projects that have applied for money and been kept waiting for months without hearing anything. During that period of

frustration and delay, they've either gone elsewhere with their funding applications, such as the National Lottery, or they've collapsed altogether. There is a sports club, for instance, which trains youngsters in football, cricket and volleyball, that has waited more than six months for news of its grant.

These failures undermine the good intentions of government when it sets up the City Challenge scheme. I and some fellow directors are hoping to meet with central government officials in a few days' time to discuss alternative ideas for trying to achieve the vision set out originally in the Action Plan of the city challenge. We haven't given up on it: we want to get it back on course. But that will not be done by pouring millions of public money into one central area of Brixton. It can only be done, I believe, with another central government intervention, to help create a consortium of investors that will deliver the goods, and make our 30-year dream of development of central Brixton a reality. If government fails this time, I fear the people of Brixton will not forgive it.

The writer is a director of Brixton City Challenge and Chair of the National Union of Refugee Organisations.

## Threat to success

The absence of a proper strategy damaged confidence in the whole concept of local economic regeneration



Over the past years, tensions between the police and the black community in Brixton have mounted considerably. The recent deaths in police custody of two young black men have caused the situation to get out of control, incensing black families in the wider community. This has given rise to violent protests, as we saw on Wednesday evening. While I do not condone acts of lawlessness, we have to remember just how the community feels about injustices meted out to young men in particular.

The most recent police statement, about young black men being involved in mugging incidents, has only served to worsen an unstable relationship between the police and the black community in London overall.

In 1981, Lord Scarman, in the aftermath of the violent upheavals in Brixton, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol and other areas, recommended strongly that government invest more in inner-city areas to encourage minority groups to be more involved in the political process of development and change. Since then, funds have been allocated for economic regeneration in inner cities, but small black businesses in Brixton are still to benefit sufficiently from such initiatives. It has been suggested that the only way the black community

can develop is through the creation of employment opportunities, which will enable both the unemployed and professionals to contribute meaningfully towards economic and social improvement.

The absence of a proper strategy of investment in black businesses and community organisations badly damaged the confidence of the community in the whole concept of local economic regeneration.

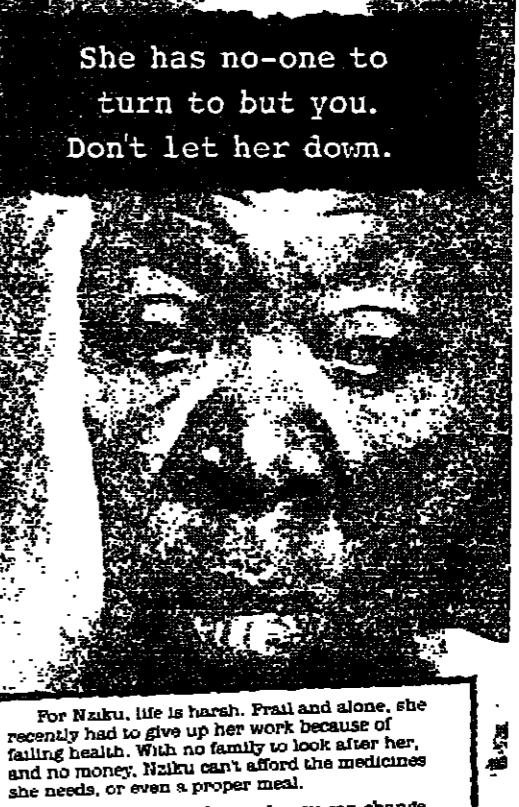
Although my own organisation's input is seen as small, it is contributing in a significant way through its various con-

nections with community enterprise groups – local and national.

My company's activities are funded by Brixton Challenge and Lambeth Council as part of a local labour scheme which involved helping many unemployed people – both black and white – into employment and training within the construction industry.

If we are ever to have development in Brixton and Lambeth generally, every effort should be made by all parties to ensure that there is no repeat of Wednesday evening's incident. Only in this way will the scale of economic and social injustice be reduced or removed altogether. And only in this way, too, will we be guaranteed stable race relations.

The writer is project manager, ICEL, Lambeth Directions.



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The party is losing its traditional hold on the female voter. Would reform of selection procedures halt the slide?

## Discontent in the ranks of Tory women

If the Labour party succeeds in defending itself against the charges of sex discrimination and actually wins the case brought by two male Labour members against women-only shortlists, then the Conservative party might overnight adopt a more aggressive equal opportunities policy than the loony-left Labour councils of the Eighties.

This might sound far-fetched. After all, I don't know of a single female Conservative MP who is committed to affirmative action or positive discrimination. But this week there has been a shift in emphasis. Sara Biffen, wife of John Biffen MP, who herself recently bid and failed in the first round to be selected as a parliamentary candidate, called on the BBC's *Midnight Hour* for women to be given a helping hand in the selection process, while simultaneously emphasising her opposition to positive discrimination.

She is one of many women for whom getting selected, let alone elected, is a trying affair. Emma Nicholson MP, who has been involved in the 300 Group, the campaign to get more women into the House of Commons, has fought to make it easier for women to overcome the hurdles of the selection process, which eliminates many women at round one of a three-round process, which begins with the local association's selection committee.

There have long been rumblings of discontent in the female ranks of



HELEN WILKINSON

Conservative party and many applicants are quite rightly impatient at biding their time and waiting for gradual change while their Labour counterparts are being actively encouraged through the process. From their point of view, there is also a new urgency. Most of the candidates for safe Conservative seats have been chosen already, only a few remain; and given the slow pace of change, Conservative women like Sara Biffen are tentatively suggesting that "perhaps", or "maybe", there should be a woman on each final shortlist to speed the process up.

What is more surprising is that earlier this week Conservative Central Office, under the stewardship of the vice-chairman, Dame Angela Kumhold, was reported to be encouraging local associations to look kindly on female candidates. Dame Angela readily acknowledges that "the Conservative party does need to get the message across that we need more women candidates and we are hoping to get that message across".

Why does the Conservative party now seem to think that it necessarily needs more women in Parliament? After all, it is the Conservative party that can truly claim to be the women's party. It has proved most effective at articulating and exemplifying women's values – their concerns for reliability and security, stable communities and strong families – and has attracted thousands of women into the party as grassroots activists. Most important of

all, the party has monopolised the women's vote. In the last election, the 9 per cent gender gap was in the Conservative party's favour, rising to a remarkable 20 per cent lead over Labour among women over 65.

But times are changing, and fast. A slender majority and bad opinion-poll ratings mean Conservative Central Office knows that no vote can be assumed, not even the women's vote.

As significant is the fact that the Conservatives' claim to be the party of women looks increasingly shaky.

Women's lives have changed dramatically in the past 20 or 30 years and Labour seems to have better understood these gender shifts in society at large and have actively made moves to minimise itself. Quotas are part of this process. They also have the added advantage that while the Conservatives have always done better with older women, Labour has proven more successful at gaining support from younger women. Women under 25, for example, were 13 per cent more likely to vote Labour than Conservative

at the last election. And under Tony Blair, Labour has steadily eroded Conservative support among other women. Recent poll evidence by MORI shows that Labour has successfully captured the support of women in the 25-to-34 bracket as well as those under 25.

Energy too is being directed at older women, those in their forties, fifties and above. Blair's incursions into enemy territory – law and order, family values and strong communities – are explicit attempts to woo older generations of women. Tessa Jowell, Opposition spokesperson for women, is touring the country, meeting middle-aged and older women and listening to their concerns.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives fear that their female support is ageing. A recent study of the membership found that the average Conservative is 61 and more than half are over 65, while only 5 per cent of its members are under 35. Labour can claim that its membership is becoming younger: the majority of new members in the past year are under 40.

So far as getting more women into Parliament is concerned, there is an additional problem. Poll evidence consistently shows that many older women are deeply traditional in their attitudes and hold strong views about women's roles, and because older women are disproportionately represented in the Conservative party, when they sit on the selection committees of local Conservative Asso-

ciations they can be openly hostile to prospective women politicians. As one female candidate told me: "I was asked by a woman why I wanted to go into Parliament and why wasn't I at home looking after my husband?"

It would be naive to suggest that a party which has proven most successful at monopolising the women's vote necessarily needs visible women in Parliament to retain them. It is the party's philosophy and programmes which will ultimately be decisive. But the failure to promote women within the party is indicative of the Conservatives' failure to keep pace with changes in society at large. Women are becoming increasingly impatient, and are generating a new set of demands which the system must respond to. In the short term it is highly unlikely that the Conservative party will suddenly decide to change its selection process.

Sara Biffen, like many other women aspiring to be selected as parliamentary candidates, acknowledges that change is unlikely to come this side of a general election, but as she wryly commented: "Everyone is susceptible to market forces. If there are 100 Labour female MPs in the House after the next general election and only 15 Conservatives, something will happen."

That something could happen as a result of the Tories losing the changing women's vote in the Nineties just as Labour lost its working-class base in the Eighties.

INDEPENDENT • Friday 15 December 1995

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2530 fax 0171-293 2098

Across the wire: Squabble with regulator follows MMC's ruling on customers who change phone systems

## BT ordered to pay bulk of £220m switching costs

PETER RODGERS  
Business Editor

BT was yesterday told to pay the bulk of the £220m of costs when customers switch to its competitors but wish to keep their existing telephone numbers.

The decision by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission will cost BT £150m and the cable companies and other competitors £60m over the next five years.

But its real significance is that it could herald a sharply increased flight of customers away from the telecoms giant.

The decision led to a day of bitter squabbling between BT and Don Cruickshank, the telecoms regulator, over which side had won an argument about who pays for so-called "number portability."

Each side also claimed that the precedents set by the MMC's decision foretold victory in important regulatory

battles to come, including a key argument over interconnection charges in the telephone network, which is expected to be sent to the MMC.

The City appeared marginally more sympathetic to the BT view and marked the shares up 5.5p to 348.5p, on the grounds that the situation had been clarified by the MMC.

Ian Morfett, director of network services and pricing at BT, agreed that the current 50,000 customers lost each month to cable companies would rise but he rejected suggestions that they would double.

The first switches will be made under the new system from next spring and it will be in full operation in 1997.

Cable companies will have to pay BT £8 to £12 every time they win a customer and BT will be entitled to charge the same if it wins them back.

But the biggest cost for BT will be in financing the system changes that make portability

possible. Industry experts expect the competing sides to absorb most or all of the cost in their general overheads, rather than add it directly to the bills of new customers won from other companies.

Mr Cruickshank has long argued that number portability is essential to increasing competition in telecommunications. Both he and the cable industry believe BT has been dragging its heels.

He said he was pleased that the MMC had endorsed his view that number portability was in the public interest and that BT should not be able to recover all the costs from other operators, as its licence provided at present.

Mr Cruickshank added: "The MMC's detailed recommendation of the allocation of costs between BT and other operators is very close to my original proposal, which would have resulted in a 75:25 split of BT's total portability costs over the next five years."

He said the MMC had recommended a 70:30 split and he alleged that BT's best offer to date would have resulted in split the other way round, of 15:85 in its favour.

He further claimed that BT's estimates for the total cost of portability had fallen considerably during the course of the MMC inquiry from £557m to £220m.

Mr Morfett said he failed to recognise any of the numbers put forward by Mr Cruickshank to back his claim that the MMC had backed the regula-

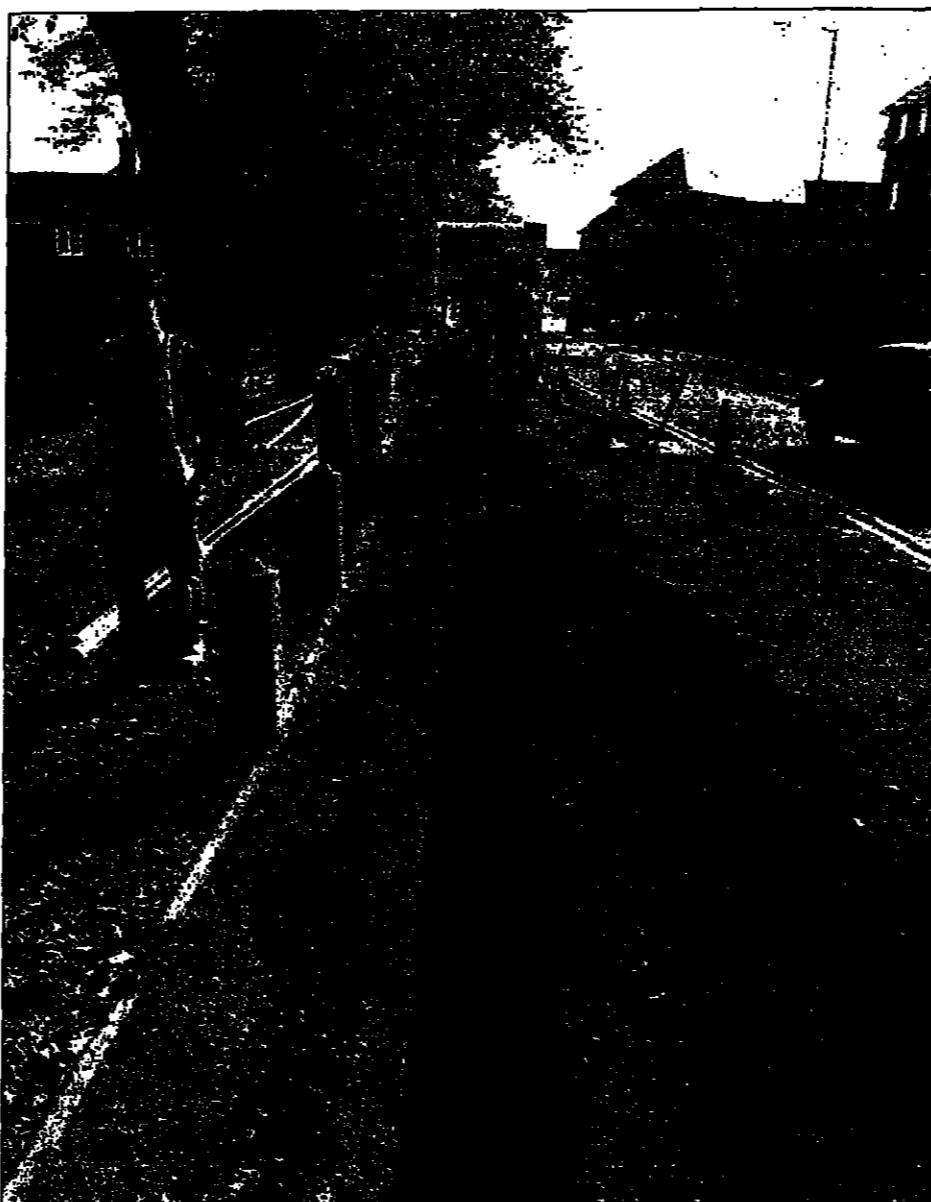
tor's line, including the proposed 75:25 split of the costs. Suggesting that the regulator had in fact been defeated in a campaign to get BT to pay everything, BT said: "Other telephone companies will now have to pay a share of the cost of implementing number portability. BT will be up to

£60m better off." Dr Alan Rudge, BT managing director, also said: "Our decision to push for an MMC reference has been vindicated" and he denied that BT had ever opposed number portability.

The Cable Communications Association reacted with delight to the MMC report, saying: "They knew they would ultimately lose but they have tried as long as possible to postpone the evil day."

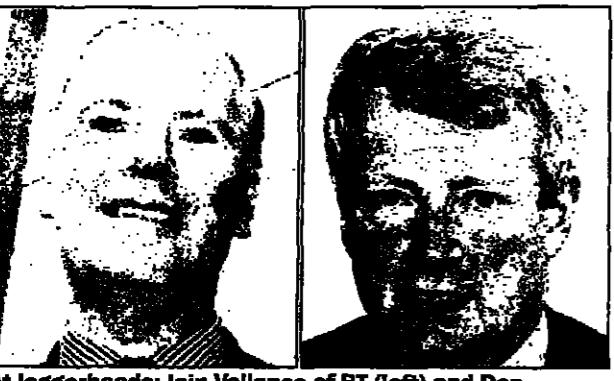
Mercury Communications said the report was an important step towards effective competition in the UK telecoms market.

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Cable coup: The cable industry reacted with delight to the report from the MMC on who picks up the bill for number portability

Photograph: Keith Dohney



At loggerheads: Iain Vallance of BT (left) and Don Cruickshank, director general of Ofcom

Cheaper finance: Bundesbank begins downward drive while signs of weakness in Britain prompt speculation that the Bank of England may follow suit

## Germany leads rates down across Europe

PAUL WALLACE  
Economics Editor

Interest rates fell further across Europe yesterday, led by the German Bundesbank which was followed swiftly by moves from several other countries. And in the US, subdued inflation and economic activity in November strengthened the possibility that the Federal Reserve will cut rates when it meets on Tuesday.

In the City, the short sterling contract used to speculate on future interest rates ended the day implying base rates below 1 per cent by June. Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, revealed that he had anticipated a cut by the German central bank when recommending the reduction in base rates on Wednesday.

The Bundesbank cut the discount rate, which sets the floor to German interest rates, from 3.5 to 3 per cent. It also brought down the ceiling Lombard rate from 5.5 to 5 per cent and said that the repo rate, the main rate it uses in the money markets, would be fixed at 3.75 per cent until early January.

The move down in Germany prompted a wave of cuts in Europe. Austria, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and the Irish Republic followed suit. The Swiss National Bank had

IMRE KARACS  
Bonn

The Bundesbank's decision yesterday to cut interest rates by half a percentage point is capitulation in the face of the clamouring from politicians and businesses.

The move is aimed to kick-start the locomotive of Europe's economy, which seems in danger of running into the buffers. Statistics released over the past week show that only the ranks of the unemployed are growing in Germany as the economy dips into recession.

The government can do little to heed demands for increased spending to boost growth. The budget deficit is already perilously close to the 3 per cent of GDP that the Maa-

richt Treaty has prescribed for countries wanting to participate in European monetary union. So far, Germany has played the role of the disciplinarian in European fiscal policy; it cannot therefore bust the limits it has set for other member states.

Raising more taxes also appears to be impossible. Germans are already paying more money than their European counterparts and the so-called "solidarity surcharge" – an extra 1.5 per cent on income tax to help rebuild eastern Germany – is one of the culprits held responsible for throttling the economy.

Other scapegoats are the

abolition of tax-breaks for home builders at the end of last year, which has produced a slump in the construction sector, and the mighty mark. Since March the national currency has been rising against the dollar, making German exports more expensive, which in turn has undermined domestic confidence and forced industry to postpone capital projects.

While there is no end in sight to the mark's triumphant march, the government is hoping that industry will eventually be able to adapt by trimming production costs.

But recently, industry has started employing a new tactic: exporting jobs instead of goods

## Bankers capitulate to the demands for growth

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Correspondent

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to countries where workers come cheap, notably Britain. The last pay round for the engineering and chemical sectors resulted in wage deals valued at between 3.6 and 4 per cent, far above annual inflation of under 2 per cent.

The rising trend of jobs for export has alarmed the trade unions, which have proposed an "Alliance for Jobs" between the workers, the employers and the government. The pact, calling for modest pay rises and flexibility on working hours in exchange for a pledge to create 300,000 jobs over the next three years, was put forward by IG Metall, the country's most powerful union.

The government has shown mild interest, but employers are holding out for greater con-

## Slowdown points to more UK cuts

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Correspondent

Flat retail prices last month and evidence of a further slowdown in manufacturing industry fuelled hopes yesterday that more cuts in base rates are on the way.

With headline inflation down slightly in November, Britain has enjoyed the longest peace-time run of low inflation since the Thirties. Inflation has stayed below 4 per cent for 38 months.

In another sign of the weakness of inflationary pressure, the Confederation of British Industry said members were predicting slower growth in the new year. According to its monthly survey, the balance of firms expecting output to rise rather

than fall was down to its lowest since the beginning of 1993.

Sudhir Jumkar of the CBI said: "We would probably recommend a further interest rate cut if this slowdown continues, as long as the inflation outlook remains sound."

However, there was a brighter note from the House Builders' Federation yesterday. The day after mortgage rates fell to their lowest in a generation, it said the housing market was poised for recovery.

The Government's confidence in inflation prospects was demonstrated yesterday by a Bank of England announcement of consultation about reforms that will allow the issue of more index-linked gilts.

Andrew Roberts, gilts expert at UBS, said: "The Government should issue as much index-linked stock as they can if they believe their own inflation fore-

cast." There would be less interest to pay as long as inflation stays lower than the financial markets expect.

City economists said the encouraging figure for retail prices in November cleared the way for more base rate falls. The headline rate of inflation fell from 3.2 to 3.1 per cent. The target measure, excluding mortgage interest payments, was unchanged at 2.9 per cent.

Cheaper cars, pre-Christmas special offers on alcohol and a decline in seasonal food prices offset higher prices for other goods and services in November.

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Although the City saw Mr Cruickshank losing on points, the result of this vital first bout may well prove to have been the other way round.

**BT walks a fine line with its public battles**

Don Cruickshank, the telecoms regulator, and senior executives of BT, were giving briefings yesterday morning at their offices a few hundred yards apart in London. They might as well have been on different planets for all they understood each other. Each side had read the same monopolies commission report on portability, which will allow telephone customers to take their numbers with them when changing supplier – a world first. The British communications industry should be proud of. But there were amazing differences of interpretation.

The simplest part of the argument was the knockabout of subtle about costs. BT was tremendously pleased Mr Cruickshank had been forced to extract a £60m contribution from the cable companies because the dastardly jello had wanted BT to pay the lot. For his part, Mr Cruickshank saw BT fighting tooth and nail, first exaggerating the cost and then being beaten down by the MMC, both on the size of the bill and the proportion to be paid by competitors.

He said he had letters proving that in March he had suggested the cable companies pay 25 per cent of the bill, close to the MMC's eventual recommendation. BT executives, scratching their heads, said they could not remember the correspondence.

But the real significance of this row is what it says about rather bigger battles to come. BT expressed its delight that the MMC had

clipped the regulator's wings, by taking out of his hands key decisions about costs and making them subject to a proper formula.

But Mr Cruickshank claimed the opposite: the MMC report gave more power to his elbow as a regulator, including greater rather than less discretion. In particular, the MMC backed his campaign to assess BT's costs as if it were using the best technical solution available, even if the company had not got round to it. And when BT promises to introduce a cheaper solution by a certain date, then it will be assessed on that basis whether it meets the deadline or not. Mr Cruickshank calls this incentive regulation.

Although the City saw Mr Cruickshank losing on points, the result of this vital first bout may well prove to have been the other way round. There is no doubt whatever that BT will take future cases, and especially Mr Cruickshank's proposed toughening of the regulatory regime, to the MMC. But there must be severe risks for the company in these very public battles, which can easily backfire.

#### More time needed to make the dream reality

The Madrid summit, which begins today, has long been keenly awaited by the markets as the event that will give new impetus to economic and monetary union

(EMU). In the event it is being overshadowed by events in Paris. The turmoil on the streets of French cities is rightly judged to be a turning point for EMU. Without French participation, the project is emptied of meaning. The Germans have declared that there is no real point in going ahead without France.

The commitment of the French political elite to EMU is not in doubt. What hangs in the balance is the political acceptability of the harsh measures needed to prepare France for the bracingly teutonic regime of the single currency.

At present, the markets are giving Mr Chirac the benefit of the doubt despite his concessions on public sector pensions and reform of the debt-laden SNCF. The retreat from the politically misguided attempt to take on all comers in one fell swoop is seen as an attempt to preserve the *jeu de la Juppé* plan, the determination to slash the social security budget deficit.

It is hard to tell, at this stage, whether this view is well founded. The scale of protest against the government came as a surprise, not least to union leaders, who found themselves able to capitalise upon a popular groundswell. But even if the welfare reforms remain intact and the popular uprising subsides, there remains a big question mark over France's ability to comply with the Maastricht convergence criteria. The econ-

omy has been growing at a snail's pace in the past six months and looks set to slow down still further as a consequence of the strikes. The problem is that France needs growth of about 3 per cent a year in both 1996 and 1997 to come within spitting distance of the Maastricht objective of a budget deficit of 3 per cent or less.

The cut in rates announced by the German Bundesbank will help the French to ease monetary policy, but only if there is a restoration in confidence. As Mr Juppé ducks and weaves his way to a negotiated settlement with the strikers, that seems far from certain. The French popular revolt against what can be depicted as an EMU inspired assault on social rights will cast a long shadow into 1996 and beyond. The markets are seeing the irresistible force of monetary union come up against the immovable object of popular resistance.

Like some great superanker, the process steams on regardless. At Madrid this weekend, European leaders are expected to sanction a new, if wholly uninspiring, name for the single currency – the Euro – as well as a timetable for changing over to it. After course now, and the goal of monetary union will sink for ever, many believe. So the building blocks continue to be moved into place, regardless of the shaky foundations on which they are being placed.

The reality is that the necessary level of convergence – not just between EU members more generally but also between France and Germany – is going to require much longer than the present tight timetable allows for. Recognising this may be hard for Europe's political elite, but if the dream is ever going to come to fruition, it needs a longer gestation.

#### Ameec bid goes down to the wire

After the light relief caused by the skirmishes with the Takeover Panel, the £360m bid for Ameec is now moving into its decisive phase. The indications ahead of Monday's final deadline are that result could go down to the wire.

Yesterday, the group won some surprisingly emphatic backing from several large institutional investors, including the mighty M&G. The outcome could turn on the attitudes of the notoriously secretive PDMF and of small investors who hold around 20 per cent of the shares.

If Ameec does escape the clutches of Kvaerner, it will be a remarkable about turn for one of the many walking wounded of the UK construction industry. If institutions decide to throw out the bid that they are placing hefty bets on recovery at last being just around the corner.

#### Giveaways: Electricity and water firms confirm handouts



Paying out: London's Michael Kersey (left) and Bob Reid

Photograph: Jane Baker

## Utility shareholders net £1.2bn bonanza

**PETER RODGERS**  
Business Editor

Handouts of £460m were confirmed yesterday by three electricity and water companies, bringing their total distribution to shareholders announced in recent weeks to more than £1.2bn.

The giveaways yesterday were by Southern Electric, which paid a special dividend of £150m, London Electricity, which confirmed a similar payout of £148.7m, and Southern Water, which bought back £113m of its own shares.

The payments have been made because the companies are flush with cash and can afford to borrow much more heavily than in the past to finance their investment programmes.

Although long expected, they are bound to reinforce criticisms of the utility by Labour, which has threatened a windfall tax but may see much of the companies' spare cash given away by the election.

Shareholders in each of the two electricity companies are already benefiting from a handout of National Grid shares after last week's flotation – worth £550m for London shareholders and £2.2m for Southern.

In its previous financial year London also did £150m of share buybacks, bringing total distribution of surplus cash to £700m.

The latest moves followed hard on the heels of the £238m special dividend announced by the regional electricity company East Midlands on Wednesday – a company that is also handing £300m of its National Grid shares to shareholders.

Southern Electric's special dividend is worth 50p a share, less than half the 120p paid by East Midlands, and raising its gearing to 15 per cent. Southern's profits before tax for the half-year rose to £127.8m from £106.8m.

Geoffrey Wilson, the chairman, said the special dividend had been restrained for tax reasons, because at the level

other companies were paying there would have been a substantial additional burden of advance corporation tax.

Partly offsetting this, Southern raised its ordinary interim dividend 26.5 per cent to 10.5p a share. In common with all the regional electricity companies, Southern is paying a rebate to domestic customers of just over £50.

Mr Wilson said he still backed the idea of the takeover offer from National Power, which has been referred to the Monopolies Commission and is unlikely to be decided until next spring. The shares fell 12p to 91.6p.

London Electricity, confirming the special dividend, said it was asking shareholders to retain the flexibility to buy up to another 10 per cent of its shares back. The 10p-a-share special dividend was accompanied by doubled interim pre-tax profits, up from 24.25m to 58.45m and a 21 per cent increase in the interim dividend to 11.5p. Gearing will rise to 60 per cent. London shares fell 16p to 678p.

### Panel warns Forte

**JOHN SHEPHERD**

Forte and its financial advisers have been warned by the Takeover Panel to take more care over the wording of defence documents. The panel is concerned that the final paragraph on page one of last week's defence document against the £3.5bn bid from Granada was not worded in the usual manner.

A merchant banker, unconnected with the bid, said the wording "came close" to breaching rule 5.1 of the Takeover Code because it did not make entirely clear that the board and its advisers – SBC Warburg, UBS and Morgan Stanley – held the same opinion.

A spokesman for the panel said: "I can confirm the wording in the document is unusual. However, there is no question that the board and its advisers do not have different opinions. We anticipate more traditional wording in future documents."

Forte yesterday told City analysts that it would raise prices at Travelodge hotels by £2 to £6.50 a night. It added, however, that to raise prices further would lose customers.

Also yesterday, Granada claimed that it could boost Forte's profits by £10m a year. Forte described the claim as rubbish and asked why Granada failed to explain how it would achieve the improvements.

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### IN BRIEF

#### Iberia to receive £650m subsidy

Iberia, the Spanish airline company, is to be allowed by Neil Kinnock, the European Commissioner, to receive a subsidy of 87bn pesetas (£650m) from its state-owned holding company, Teneo. A further £200m may be allowed in 1997.

The Commission's agreement comes despite objections by other European airlines that the capital injection was an indirect form of state aid. Iberia argued that the subsidy, which follows wage cuts of 15 per cent for airline staff and 3,500 planned redundancies in the next two years, will be funded by the privatisation of other companies in the Teneo group.

An Iberia spokesman said yesterday: "We are delighted the [Commission] has concluded that the capital injection is not state aid but the sensible action of an interested shareholder."

#### Watchdog to investigate PFIs

The National Audit Office, Parliament's independent financial watchdog, is to set up a series of inquiries into whether the Government's Private Finance Initiative provides value for money. The NAO aims to report over the next 12 months on whether the PFI initiatives, which will cost up to £1.2bn between now and 1997, provide value to taxpayers.

#### Daily Mail profits plunge to £67m

Hefty redundancy charges and the soaring cost of newsprint have depressed profits at Daily Mail & General Trust, publisher of the *Daily Mail*, *Mail on Sunday* and the *Evening Standard*. The pre-tax total sank from £92.1m to £66.8m in the year to 1 October despite record advertising revenues and strong growth in circulation at the Associated National newspaper subsidiary. The company charged £21.8m for redundancy and reorganisation costs, but refused to say how many staff left the group. Both circulation levels and advertising remain buoyant, it said.

*Investment column*, page 22

#### Arjo subsidiary to fight fixing allegations

Arjo Wiggins Appleton said yesterday its US subsidiary, Appleton Papers, would defend itself vigorously against charges that it conspired with certain of its competitors to fix the price of thermal fax paper in a period up to 1991. Appleton Papers was formally indicted yesterday but had known it was the subject of a Department of Justice investigation since March 1994. Arjo said any ultimate liability should not have a material adverse effect on the group's balance sheet. The shares fell 4p to 157p.

## Microsoft unveils \$200m TV news plan

**DAVID USBORNE**  
New York

NBC, the American television network, and Microsoft, the world's biggest software company, announced two joint ventures yesterday to develop a 24-hour cable news unit and an online news service for the Internet.

Microsoft, founded by the billionaire entrepreneur Bill Gates, is to invest \$220m (£140m) over five years for a half-share in the cable unit, to

be called MSNBC Cable. Expected to begin operations within six months, the venture will represent the first serious challenge to Ted Turner's CNN.

The two companies will meanwhile have equal shares also in MSNBC Online, which will package the news for distribution on the Internet. The Online service will provide both text and graphics, incorporating video from NBC, and will be fully interactive.

The companies said that they

expected to invest an additional \$200m between them, also over five years, for the development of the two services. MSNBC Cable will be managed by NBC solely, while MSNBC Online will be jointly managed, with NBC retaining exclusive responsibility for news content.

"Both of the companies are saving we believe in the world of interactivity but we're bringing this world into broadcast," Mr Gates said. "We'll be working with NBC to create an integrated media experience."

The move is intended to steal a march on ABC, shortly to become a unit of Disney, which earlier this month announced plans for a 24-hour news channel starting in 1997. Rupert Murdoch also vowed recently to embark on a non-stop news channel.

Andrew Lack, NBC's head of news programming, said the deal represented "a giant leap for electronic journalism into the next century". The online service will be boosted by the in-

roduction of modern technology next year allowing full video to be shown on personal computers on the Internet.

Users of the service will be able to tailor exactly which stories in the day's news they wish to view and, equally, to highlight specific elements in a single story that may interest them.

In Europe the MSNBC Cable service will be delivered to viewers by NBC's existing cable and satellite operation, Super-Channel/CNBC.



**Shareholder information update. AMEC's response to Kvaerner's offers. To hear your Board's advice call 0800 77 11 77.**

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## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

## Asda bandwagon gathers speed

The Asda bandwagon seems to have built up such momentum as to appear unstoppable. After a triumphant year in which it has successfully challenged the Net Book Agreement and taken a well publicised tilt at the price maintenance of over-the-counter drugs, the supermarket group has continued to deliver industry-beating results.

Yesterday's figures continued the pattern. Half year profits were up 27 per cent to £138m and like-for-like sales up a thumping 12.6 per cent.

This is double Tesco's figure and streets ahead of struggling Sainsbury, whose most recent figures show a 2.2 per cent drop.

Asda has established itself as the lower priced alternative to Tesco and Sainsbury and has continued to use lower prices to drive sales. Yesterday Archie Norman, chief executive, said he hoped the group could deliver like-for-like sales increases of 5-10 per cent over the next few years.

True, lower prices mean a slimmer margin but Asda has even managed to improve this from 4.2 per cent to 4.6 per cent. There should be more to come as the company invests in new technology such as sales-based ordering systems which most rivals introduced some time ago.

Asda's view is that the UK grocery market is mature and that small points of difference will count. Asda plans to use its larger stores to offer services which rivals may have little space for, such as bakeries, rotisseries and salad bars.

The George range of clothing will be promoted heavily, building on the designer background of George Davies, the founder of Next. The label accounts for 4.7 per cent of sales and could reach 8 per cent within three years. That means £200m more sales.

Asda also has a new Market Hall store format which is lighter, less like a warehouse and presents goods in sections or stalls rather than mile-long shelves.

The concept is working and others will gradually be converted. Though planning restrictions will limit new openings, six more should open per year which will all be in the Market Hall format.

If there is a potential problem for Asda it is the actions of Sainsbury, which is certain to flex its muscles in the New Year to reverse its decline. But even this is unlikely to rock Asda's boat too much. After busily upgrading yesterday, most analysts have settled near

NatWest Securities' forecast of £304m for the full year.

The shares have had a strong run this year, rising by 50 per cent. With yesterday's 1p rise to 106.5p they are on a forward rating of 15. Still attractive.

## Doubts spread at Securicor

Securicor's shares have had a dreadful run since the summer, hit by a DTT ruling forbidding BT from buying the company's 40 per cent stake in Cellnet and a growing realisation that the outlook for that mobile phone business is deteriorating. The shares, which reached 1,125p last yesterday at 870p.

Pre-tax profits of £99.4m in the 12 months to September were well up on the £80.6m achieved last year but at the bottom end of expectations and analysts rejigged their forecasts accordingly. After a rise in earnings per share from 37.5p to 44p, however, an 18 per cent dividend rise to 4.02p was paid.

Securicor's shares rose sharply in the first half of the year as the market span

a web of complicated valuations for the share in Cellnet, sums which some analysts now believe were as misleading as they were arcane. Price-take-up of up to £1.5bn for the Cellnet minority are now seen as much too optimistic.

They were always going to be acts of wishful thinking given the number of assumptions involved - the amount to which a comparison with Vodafone should be discounted to take account of Cellnet's traditional reliance on less profitable non-business users, the discount for being a junior partner to BT, and the extent to which capital gains tax would eat away at notional profit.

Now Securicor looks to be saddled with its profitable but inflexible investment, attention has turned to its underlying performance and here too doubts are creeping in. With the industry's growth increasingly focused on digital rather than analogue networks, Cellnet now finds itself competing with three other suppliers rather than one. Operating margins are thought to have fallen from 40 per cent in 1993 to maybe only 27 per cent currently.

So how to measure the shares? Probably on the assumption that with earnings still growing at a useful 15 per cent or so a market rating is appropriate

on fundamentals and then some to account for the residual bid premium. On the basis of profits of £1.15m to next September, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 17. About right.

## Paper problems at Daily Mail

Daily Mail and General Trust, owner of the eponymous daily newspaper, remains very much a family business. Control of the voting shares is still firmly in the hands of the Rothermores and, to rub the point home, yesterday DMGT appointed Jonathan Harmsworth, a 28-year old scion of the family, to the board.

Any paternalism within the group has not prevented the national papers cleaning up during the recession. But the soaring cost of newsprint has stopped the trend in its tracks this year. Pre-tax profits slumped from £92.1m to £66.5m in the 12 months to 1 October, hit by an extra £20m on the paper bill and an estimated £10m additional spending on the editorial content of the newspapers.

The company warns that newsprint costs will continue to be a factor in the coming year - analysts suggest that a 10 per cent rise in January could follow this summer's 25 per cent increase - but refused to let that dampen their underlying bullishness.

The omens are good. The Associated offshoot, owner of the *Daily Mail*, *Mail on Sunday* and *Evening Standard*, has seen record advertising revenues - up 10 per cent on last year - and further gains in circulation. Autumn cover price increases should offset pressure from the costs side, allowing the expected buoyancy in advertising to fall through to the bottom line in the current year.

There may also be scope for Associated to push up rates, given circulation increases and the collapse of Rupert Murdoch's *Today*, which should tighten the advertising market. Meanwhile the Northcliffe regional business has had a storming year.

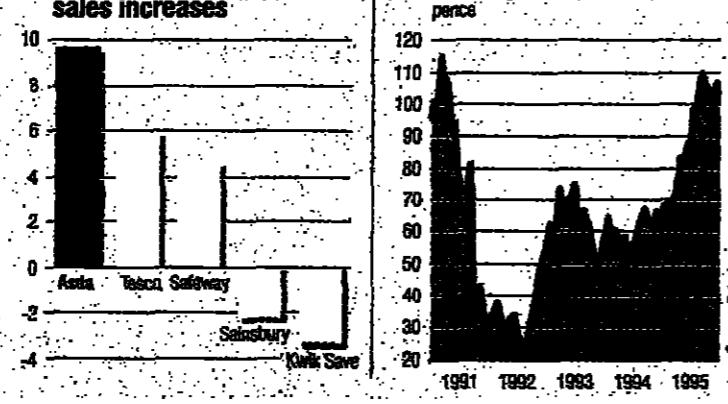
The 70 per cent-owned Euromoney has had its own problems. But assuming this year's problems are past and with cost savings due to kick in, DMGT could produce between £110m and £115m this year, putting the non-voting shares, down 18p at £1.20, on a forward multiple of 16. Up with events.

## Asda: at a glance

Market value: £2.1bn, share price 106.5p

Five year record	1993	1994	1995	1994/95	1995/96
Pre-tax profits (£m)	187.4	125.9	257.2	108.7	133.3
Dividends per share (pence)	1.6	1.8	2.2	0.61	0.72

## Recent comparative sales increases



## Scottish Hydro primes £450m takeover bid

TOM STEVENSON

Deputy City Editor

Scottish Hydro-Electric said yesterday it had secured a two-to-three-year borrowing facility to finance its bid for First Hydro, the pumped storage business put up for sale by the National Grid.

The bid, thought to be in the region of £450m, would take the company's gearing to between 80 and 90 per cent and would reduce interest cover from its current 30 to less than 5 times.

Scottish and its two US bidders must hand in bids for First Hydro by Monday next and the result is expected fairly soon thereafter. The three bidders were selected from an original list of 11, having submitted the highest opening bids prior to due diligence.

Scottish Hydro's opening offer was reported to have been £450m, while Mission Energy, one of the two US contenders, was said to have made a first offer of £600m.

News of Scottish Hydro's banking facility came as the company announced an 11 per cent rise in underlying profits in the six months to September. Reported profits were actually up sharply from £34.9m to



Lord Wilson: confident of future prospects

£61.7m, but the previous year's figure was distorted by the cost of an £18.8m premium paid to redeem a tranche of government debt.

Lord Wilson of Tullyorn, chairman, said: "The second half of the financial year has started satisfactorily and we are confident of an encouraging result for the full period."

Strong underlying earnings growth had come mainly from improved sales throughout Britain which had offset the real

price reductions in most markets. Sales volumes to domestic customers in Scotland increased compared with 1994, reversing the negative impact of VAT last year. Commercial and industrial volumes also increased, but real price reductions offset the benefit so that total turnover in Scotland fell slightly.

Sales in England and Wales grew strongly. Volumes increased by 18 per cent and turnover rose even more, by 21 per cent. More than a third of the company's total electricity sales and 30 per cent of total turnover is accounted for south of the border.

On the proposed bid for First Hydro, John Gray, finance director, stressed that the opening bids were not binding, and said Scottish would not be prepared to push £600m for the business. "We are not going to get into some emotional contest ... we are not going to overplay it," he added.

Elsewhere on the investment side, Scottish Hydro is committed to installing a combined heat and power plant at Salt Union's premises in Cheshire at a cost of £25m. At East Lancs Paper the company is investing £16m in CHP equipment.

Another big investor said yesterday it would also be rejecting the bid. "Quite simply, we think it undervalues [Amec] by a reasonably obvious margin."

## Amec wins powerful supporter

## MAGNUS GRIMOND and JOHN EISENHAMMER

M&amp;G, one of the biggest shareholders in the embattled construction group Amec, has decided to reject the £360m offer from Kvaerner and criticised the bidder's tactics.

The move is an important fillip for Amec just days before Monday's closing date. There are indications that other big shareholders may be moving its way.

At M&G spokesman said: "It looks like the wrong time of the cycle to be selling." The 100p a share being offered by Kvaerner would be "the wrong price to do it".

Management changes at Amec should be given time to work through, he said. He also hit out at the time-scale invoked by Kvaerner. "The whole thing has been too rushed through."

The investment management group holds 8 per cent of Amec's ordinary shares and 10 per cent of the convertibles, making it the group's second largest shareholder.

Another big investor said yesterday it would also be rejecting the bid. "Quite simply, we think it undervalues [Amec] by a reasonably obvious margin."

## INTEREST RATE CHANGE

Investment and Savings  
With effect from 15th December 1995, the interest rates for the following share and deposit accounts will be:

CURRENT ISSUE ACCOUNTS		Gross % p.a.
Type of Account	Interest access	
SPECIAL 85	6 days' notice	6.00
	£100,000 and over	6.16
C.A.R. †	£100,000 to £29,999	5.30
C.A.R. †	£29,999 to £14,999	5.64
C.A.R. †	£14,999 to £2,499	4.90
C.A.R. †	£2,499 and over	4.50
C.A.R. †	£100,000 to £24,999	5.56
C.A.R. †	£24,999 to £12,499	5.61
C.A.R. †	£12,499 to £2,499	5.08
C.A.R. †	£2,499 and over	4.72
TESSA ELITE	No change	5.75
POSTMASTER	No change	5.75
OFFSHORE INSTANT ACCESS	Instant access by post	5.45
	£100,000 and over	5.51
	£50,000 to £29,999	5.45
	£29,999 to £14,999	5.30
	£14,999 to £2,499	5.08
	£2,499 and over	4.72
CLIENT'S RESERVE	Instant access	5.45
	£100,000 and over	5.51
	£50,000 to £29,999	5.45
	£29,999 to £14,999	5.30
	£14,999 to £2,499	5.08
	£2,499 and over	4.72
BUSINESS EXTRAS	Instant access	5.70
	£100,000 and over	5.75
	£50,000 to £29,999	5.65
	£29,999 to £14,999	5.50
	£14,999 to £2,499	5.20
	£2,499 and over	4.80
HIGHER RISK	Instant access	5.70
	£100,000 and over	5.75
	£50,000 to £29,999	5.65
	£29,999 to £14,999	5.50
	£14,999 to £2,499	5.20
	£2,499 and over	4.80
CHARITY ACCOUNT	Instant access	5.25
	£100,000 and over	5.35
	£50,000 to £29,999	5.25
	£29,999 to £14,999	5.10
	£14,999 to £2,499	4.80
	£2,499 and over	4.45
CLOSED ISSUE ACCOUNTS		5.13
Type of Account		Gross % p.a.
AVC		5.13
CASH CONTROLLER		2.35
	£10,000 and over	2.35
	£2,000 to £9,999	2.35
	£1,000 to £1,999	2.10
	Up to £999	0.75

The interest rates on all other accounts will remain unchanged, except where individual notification is made. Interest will be paid gross to non-taxpayers subject to eligibility and the required registration. Otherwise interest will be paid after deduction of basic rate income tax.

† Gross Compounded Annual Rate where the interest is re-invested in the account monthly.

‡ If the capital balance in the account is below or falls below this minimum initial investment, interest will be payable at the standard interest rate for the Investment Share Account (excluding bonus) for so long as the capital balance remains below the minimum.

§ If the balance in the account is below £100 for a period of 3 consecutive months or more, a charge of £1 per quarter will be debited to the account.

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# Charlton in no hurry to abdicate his throne

**Phil Shaw** on the road ahead for the Republic of Ireland and their manager after elimination from Euro '96

If we are to believe Jack Charlton, who has a habit of changing his mind on this matter, he will consider his position as manager of the Republic of Ireland during a Spanish holiday before deciding in the New Year whether to embark on another World Cup qualifying campaign.

Charlton, who will be 61 in May, suggested before October's game against Latvia that he would not stay if the Republic did not reach the European Championships next summer. In Portugal last month he denied saying any such thing and announced that the public, rather than the press, would be the arbiters of his fate.

Now, in the aftermath of a 2-0 defeat by the Netherlands, which confirmed the Dutch as the last of the 16 qualifiers, the procrastination has to stop. Charlton is "said" by sources close to the Football Association of Ireland to want to continue, a feeling which may have intensified when he saw what appears one of the less arduous routes to the 1998 World Cup.

So farewell then... Four Irish stalwarts near the end of the line



JOHN ALDRIDGE

Age: 37

Height: 6ft 2in

Once a star of Liverpool's灿烂 career, and after a dozen defenders he was expected to do for the Republic of Ireland. "Many more of us and our legs are not up to it to start the qualifiers," he said. "I'm not against [saying] I'm not fit for the team behind [Frank] Stapleton's record, but the [Tottenham Hotspur] Rover no longer has the legs for the role."

TONY CASCARINO

Age: 32

Height: 5ft 10in

After 100 caps, 1994 World Cup winner, he will be offered a new deal by the FAI. Charlton's decision to leave England and return to Tottenham Hotspur has not been fully explained, but Cascarino's improved touch on the ground has been a factor in his appointment as Republic of Ireland's new captain. The 1994 World Cup winner, he was also the best player at Anfield after the goalless draw with Liverpool.

ROY KEANE

Age: 29

Height: 5ft 10in

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PAUL MCGRATH

Age: 30

Height: 5ft 10in

After 100 caps, 1994 World Cup winner, he will be offered a new deal by the FAI. Charlton's decision to leave England and return to Tottenham Hotspur has not been fully explained, but Cascarino's improved touch on the ground has been a factor in his appointment as Republic of Ireland's new captain. The 1994 World Cup winner, he was also the best player at Anfield after the goalless draw with Liverpool.

game than a contact sport, but Charlton, by his own admission, is "of the old school". The route-one approach he calls "simple" was exposed as merely simplistic by the sophistication of the Dutch.

The ball seldom left the ground when Guus Hiddink's side were in possession; it was hardly ever out in the air when the Irish had the ball. Edgar Davids and Clarence Seedorf proved themselves prodigious midfield talents; the finishing of Patrick Kluivert was ruthless and precise; and the imposing Michael Bogarde demonstrated against Cascarino that the Dutch have not forgotten how to head a ball.

Before he left the post-match press conference in a huff, Charlton's decision to send on Alan Kernaghan for John Aldridge was queried. It was a switch made with valid tactical aims in mind, but seemed to sum up his lost touch for it meant the Irish had eight defenders on the pitch when they were a goal behind.

Charlton, extraordinarily, had no attacker on the bench, having deemed Mark Kennedy too young for such a big game. The Liverpool winger is, in fact, two months older than Kluivert.

■ Patrick Kluivert, who scored both the Dutch goals at Anfield on Wednesday night, has pledged his loyalty to his club, Ajax, the European champions, despite inevitable speculation that he will soon be on his way to Italy. "People keep asking me if I want to go and play in Italy," he said. "It is nice to be talked of in this way but we will have to see what happens. I have one year left in my contract. I love playing for Ajax and to be compared to Marco van Basten is a great honour."

## Davenport the pride of Southport

### Non-League notebook

RUPERT METCALF

Some professional footballers drop out of the full-time game and, in the words of the Southport manager, Billy Ayre, "treat Non-League football as some sort of gray train." There are others, though, who cope admirably with the change in their status and set a splendid example, and Southport have one such player in Peter Davenport.

The former England, Nottingham Forest and Manchester United striker joined the GM Vauxhall Conference club just after the start of 1995-96.

After a couple of seasons in Scunthorpe, he spent the pre-season period with Scarborough, and he wasn't fully fit when he joined, Ayre explained last night, "but since he's been fit, and I've put him in the side, he's been exemplary. He has a tremendous will to win, and he works ever so hard."

Davenport is Southport's top scorer this term with eight goals to date, the most recent of which came in last Saturday's outstanding 3-2 win at Kidderminster Harriers. The Haig Avenue club have won five of their last six games — a record which earned Ayre the GMVC "Manager of the Month" award for November — and have climbed to eighth place in the table.

Southport finished third last

season and fourth in '93-94, and Ayre is confident that they can claim an even higher position at the end of this campaign — and maybe even win the Football League place they lost to Wigan in 1978 — their Haig Avenue ground satisfies League requirements. "We're not keeping too many clean sheets but we're getting plenty of goals, and we've got four other regular scorers as well as Davenport," Ayre, who joined Southport late last season, said. "We're playing with confidence now."

Power to the people, or more

correctly to the 18 first-class counties, was the message to the England chairman of selectors, Raymond Illingworth, following the Test and County Cricket Board winter meeting at a bleak and blustery Lord's.

If that was something of a foggy decision, the one concerning

players with dual nationality

such as England born, Australia-raised Andrew Symonds, who has just been named in Australia's preliminary World Cup squad of 20, was mystifying. In September, Symonds, 20, rejected an invitation to go on the



Jack Charlton reflects on Ireland's defeat by the Netherlands at Anfield on Wednesday

Photograph: PA

## TCCB rejects Illingworth demand

### Cricket

DAVID LLEWELLYN

Power to the people, or more correctly to the 18 first-class counties, was the message to the England chairman of selectors, Raymond Illingworth, following the Test and County Cricket Board winter meeting at a bleak and blustery Lord's.

The TCCB's cricket committee had put forward a recommendation — naturally welcomed by Illingworth — that he should be allowed to overrule a counties' selection of an England player for them if it was felt to be in the best interests of the Test side.

But while not being thrown

out, the 20-strong board refused to sanction any such increase in the England supreme's power-base. Instead they declared their sympathy for Illingworth and compromised by inviting him to tackle counties on an individual basis as and when the need arose.

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such as England born, Australia-raised Andrew Symonds, who has just been named in Australia's preliminary World Cup squad of 20, was mystifying. In September, Symonds, 20, rejected an invitation to go on the

ing county cricket as an England qualified player in future.

Gloucestershire's secretary, Philip August, said last night: "Andrew has not yet signed a contract to play for us in 1996. But if he does, we don't anticipate any problems."

OTHER DECISIONS: Previews 1: Huddersfield 1976, 2: Macclesfield 1976, 3: Merton 1976, 4: Cheltenham 1976, 5: Wokingham 1976, 6: Bedfordshire 1976, 7: Oxfordshire 1976, 8: Gloucestershire 1976, 9: Herefordshire 1976, 10: Shropshire 1976, 11: Warwickshire 1976, 12: Northamptonshire 1976, 13: Leicestershire 1976, 14: Nottinghamshire 1976, 15: Derbyshire 1976, 16: Derbyshire 1976, 17: Cheshire 1976, 18: Lancashire 1976, 19: Lancashire 1976, 20: Lancashire 1976, 21: Lancashire 1976, 22: Lancashire 1976, 23: Lancashire 1976, 24: Lancashire 1976, 25: Lancashire 1976, 26: Lancashire 1976, 27: Lancashire 1976, 28: Lancashire 1976, 29: Lancashire 1976, 30: Lancashire 1976, 31: Lancashire 1976, 32: Lancashire 1976, 33: Lancashire 1976, 34: Lancashire 1976, 35: Lancashire 1976, 36: Lancashire 1976, 37: Lancashire 1976, 38: Lancashire 1976, 39: Lancashire 1976, 40: Lancashire 1976, 41: Lancashire 1976, 42: Lancashire 1976, 43: Lancashire 1976, 44: Lancashire 1976, 45: Lancashire 1976, 46: 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